

‘I was raised very American except for the rice!’ Vanessa Hudgens



VANESSA
hudgens
visits her mother’s birth country to make a documentary

MANILA — Hollywood actress Vanessa Hudgens is currently visiting the Philippines, her mother’s birth country for the first time, to film a documentary exploring her Filipino heritage.

Part of the Filipino-American celebrity’s visit was a courtesy call on President Bongbong Marcos at Malacañang, during which she was also named Global Tourism Ambassador for the Philippines.

At a presscon that was moderated by television host Boy Abunda, she spoke about her experience in the Philippines so far.

“It’s a little bit of everything. It’s got paradise. It’s got the

metropolitan city. It’s got kindness, everybody is so warm, so friendly. The people here are very unique. You know, everyone is just so warm. I feel like I haven’t met anyone who seems like they’re having a bad day. The hospitality is unmatched. It’s no wonder and it’s just a really magical place,” she gushed.

Dropping more details about her forthcoming docu, she said, “Well, it’s a really intimate look at my experience in the Philippines for the very first time.

“We are really discovering this beautiful land, its wonderful people and just really getting in touch with the piece of myself that has always been there, but I’ve never known in-

timately.”

Vanessa, whose docu is directed and produced by Presidential Adviser on Creative Communications Paul Soriano, said she already couldn’t wait to come back.

“I feel like the time that I have spent here has been so incredible and so special, but I need more time. The country is so big, it has so much to offer. I’m a big beach girl. There’s so many beautiful beaches here that I still have to go to. I want to go hang out with the tribes. There’s just so much to do. I haven’t even done shopping,” Vanessa said.

Though it took some time to

VANESSA on page 14

Business advises against concon

High Cost, political debate may derail economic gains

MANILA, Philippines — Six business organizations said amending the Constitution is a “potentially disruptive proposal at a time when the country may

be poised to regain its economic momentum.”

The Filipina CEO Circle, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Justice Re-

form Initiative, Makati Business Club, Philippine Women’s Economic Network Inc., and Women Business Council

CONSTITUTION p16



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Pork shortage looms this April

Pork price hike as Holy Week nears puzzles DA



Customers shop for pork meat in Marikina Public Market on March 14, 2023.

INSIDE

The tiny Philippine island on the frontline of the US-China battle for supremacy

ONLINE Page 26

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is looking into the cause of a spike in the price of pork products despite the usual drop in demand during the Holy Week season.

According to Assistant Agriculture Secretary Rex Estoperez, retailers have complained that their suppliers informed them of a P5 price increase on April 1. The DA official made the remark on the same day President Marcos said that inflation, or the increase in prices, remains the “biggest problem” of the government.

“We know that our biggest problem at the moment is the continuous rise in prices,” Mr. Marcos said during the launching of another Kadiwa store in Limay, Bataan, on Friday.

“This became a problem because we have become overdependent on importation. We neglected agriculture for so long,” the President said, citing the surge in price inflation in the country.

He said the government would expand the opening of more Kadiwa stall—gov-

Cavite massacre of 4 OFW kids mirrors fears for those left behind, search for solutions

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PORK page 15





Jake Ojha celebrates his birthday with parents Marie & Len.



Jake Ojha celebrates his birthday with grandparents Hermie & Luth Esguerra.



Jake poses with uncle James, dad Len, uncle Vins and Marvin.



Jake poses with his cousins.



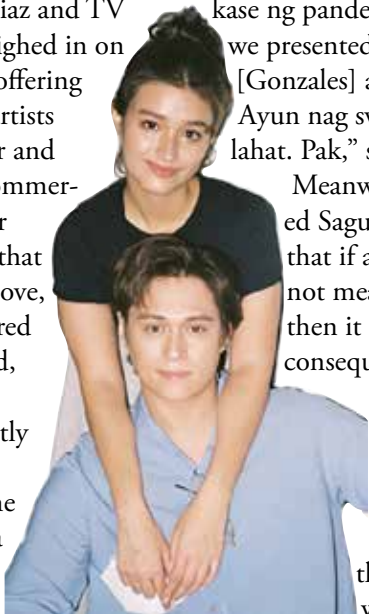
Jake Ojha celebrates his birthday with his family.

Happy Birthday Jake Ojha

‘Kung hindi ukol, hindi bubukol’

Talent manager Ogie Diaz and TV director Jojo Saguin weighed in on an industry practice of offering roles to second-choice artists who were able to deliver and made their projects a commercial success, shortly after Liza Soberano revealed that the 2019 film “Hello, Love, Goodbye” was first offered to her and her boyfriend, actor Enrique Gil.

Saguin, without directly addressing the actress, made a parallelism to the ABS-CBN teleserye “La Vida Lena,” which was originally pitched to Ivana Alawi, but was eventually offered to Erich Gonzales.



kase ng pandemic nun. Tapos we presented the story to Erich [Gonzales] and she said yes. Ayun nag swak naman ang lahat. Pak,” she said.

Meanwhile, Diaz retweeted Saguin’s post, adding that if a film project is not meant for the artist, then it is bound to have consequences.

Soberano had said that she asked Star Cinema to save the movie for her and Enrique Gil, but at that time, they were working on several projects simultaneously, and the film outfit eventually offered the titular role to Kathryn Bernardo and Alden Richards. “Hello, Love Goodbye” was named the “highest-grossing Filipino film of all time” by the production company.

Heaven Peralejo says mom diagnosed with another tumor

Heaven Peralejo’s mom Shirley Luanne previously battled uterine cancer.

Heaven Peralejo has opened about the health condition of her mother, eight years after she was first diagnosed with uterine cancer.

In a new interview with Karen Davila, the The Iron Heart actress said her mom Shiela Luanne was recently diagnosed with another tumor.

“Just this week lang po, na-diagnose na naman siya with another tumor,” Heaven revealed.

“Hindi pa nga po napa-process ng utak ko. Hindi ko pa rin po alam, kasi we’re still thinking if ipapa-surgery ba siya, kaso ayaw niya na po ng surgery. Kasi buong dibdib niya na po ‘yun. So hindi ko po alam. Parang ayaw ko po muna i-feel.”

Heaven turned emotional as she talked about her love and concern for her mother, saying she is scared of losing her.

“Of course. Like, I would do anything and everything para kay Mom, just to keep her. Kaya I’m working very, very hard kasi gusto kong ibigay sa kanya lahat ng gusto niya,” she said.

“Minsan nag-uusap kami. Sasabihin niya, ‘Oh anak, nalagay ko na sa will ko...’ Sabi ko, ‘Ha?!’ May mga ganyan nang usapan about, like, kung ano nang mang-



yayari afterward. And ewan ko, it’s hard for me also kasi logically kailangan kong i-face. Pero emotionally, it’s hard to accept.”

Looking back, Heaven said she tried to be strong for her mother during her fight with uterine cancer.

“Actually ate Karen, ito ‘yung weird, nung nalaman kong may cancer siya, never akong umiyak sa harap niya. As in ‘yung best friend ko, pupunta kami ng chapel every morning habang nasa school kami. liyak kaming dalawa. Pero ‘pag uwi ko ng bahay dapat happy ulit ako,” she said.

Of her mother, Heaven said she is her “one true love, my soulmate.”

“Yung pagmamahal ko po sa kanya, hindi [mapapan-tayan] ng kahit na sino,” she said.

In 2016, Heaven decided to leave the Pinoy Big Brother house to rush to her mother’s side after she found out that she had cancer.

Heaven’s mom was declared cancer-free in 2017.

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Ogie Diaz says ‘Eat Bulaga’ rebranding a test of loyalty

Veteran showbiz reporter Ogie Diaz reacted on the issue surrounding the country’s longest running noon-time show “Eat Bulaga.”

In her YouTube channel, Ogie said that it will be a test of loyalty for Jose Manalo, Wally Bayola and Allan K if they are loyal to the show or to Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon.

“Dito magkaalaman ang loyalty ng 4, sa TVJ ba o sa ‘Eat Bulaga’ or wala silang pakialam at ang loyalty nila ay nasa kanilang talento,” Ogie said.

There are rumors surrounding that former Congressman Romy Jalosjos is reportedly seeking to take control of Television and Production Exponents (TAPE) from his business partner Tony Tuviera and the show’s original hosts Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon.

According to a report by online site Bilyonaryo, Jalosjos plans to kick out Tuviera and TVJ out of the show.

“He just waited to Tito to get out of



politics before launching his takeover bid,” the source said.

Ogie said that he heard that Jalosjos really wanted to kick TVJ out of the show to make a rebranding.

“Sa mga hindi po nakakaalam, 43 years na po ang Eat Bulaga. Ang totoong may-ari ng korporasyon ng TAPE ay si Congressman Romeo Jalosjos. Na ang alam natin, magkaibigan sina Cong. Romeo Jalosjos at si Mr. Tony Tuviera. At ang alam ko, si Mr. T ay binigyan ng share, may percentage si Mr. T na ibinigay sa kanya nitong si Congressman Jalosjos,” Ogie said.

“Ang sabi e pagpapahingahin or kailangan nang mamaalam ng Tito, Vic and Joey,” he added.

Romy Jalosjos’ son denies rumors that Willie Revillame will replace Tito, Vic, Joey on ‘Eat Bulaga’

Dapitan City Mayor Bullet Jalosjos, TAPE Inc. treasurer, denied rumors that his father Romy wanted Willie Revillame to replace Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon as the new host of “Eat Bulaga.”

“No. Not true, for the record po,” Bullet said.

Bullet said that they will call a press conference soon to answer all the questions and announce the new format of the noontime show.

“We will have a presscon soon and answer all issues facing the company,” he said.

“At the same time, present a new format na mangyayari as agreed [upon] by all the executives,” he added.

Last month, former congressman Romy Jalosjos (PHOTO) was reportedly seeking to take control of TAPE from his business partner Tony Tuviera and the show’s original hosts Tito, Vic and Joey.



Sources claim, Jalosjos plans to kick out Tuviera and TVJ out of the show.

“He just waited to Tito to get out of politics before launching his takeover bid,” the source said.

Bilyonaryo’s source claimed that Jalosjos is reaching out to Willie Revillame to lead “Eat Bulaga” once he regains control of TAPE.

The song that Rey Valera regretted writing

If there’s one thing that prolific singer-songwriter Rey Valera is so sorry that he’s written, it is the popular OPM classic, “Kung Tayo’y Magkakalayo.”

Valera said that he had a sinking feeling that the ballad may have to do with many a breakup among lovers at the height of its popularity because of its bleak message.

“Kasi, later ko na lang na-realize na ang mga kanta palang ginagawa naming mga songwriter ay may



epekto ‘yan sa isip ng ating mga kababayan. Ikaw ang dahilan kung bakit nagkahiwalay ‘yung dalawa, eh, dahil naisabuhay nila ‘yung nasa isip nilang kanta,” Valera explained during the grand mediacon for “Kahit Maputi Na Ang Buhok Ko: The Music of Rey Valera.”

He likened it to a stanza in the national anthem which had the line “ang mamatay nang dahil sa ‘yo” (to die for you).

“Inaano tayo na ibigay ang buhay para sa (bayan) di’ ba? Ganoon din ang kantang ‘Kung



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Life’s brighter under the sun



Pokwang is not yet done with Lee O’Brian

Pokwang claimed that her former partner Lee O’Brian was initially displeased when he knew she was pregnant with their daughter Malia, as seen on the comments section of her Instagram post last Feb. 28.

The comedienne responded to other Instagram users who gave their opinions about the former’s relationship with O’Brian, although the netizens appeared to have already taken down their comments from the post.

“Hindi magiging masaya ang anak namin kapag nalaman niya na batugan

at ayaw sa kanya ng tatay niya, na nag-alit nang malaman na buntis ako!” she claimed. (Our child would not be happy if she learns that her father is lazy and did not want her as he got angry when he learned I was



pregnant.)

Pokwang also came to the realization that her ex did not really love her, and only stuck it out with her because he only used her.

On Instagram, she also alleged that she shouldered all the expenses from her prenatal checkup to childbirth.

Tayo’y Magkakalayo.’ Bagama’t hindi mo nararamdaman na maghihiwalay kayo, konting ano, parang mararamdaman mong magkakahiwalay kami. ‘Yan, pinagsisisihan ko ‘yang kantang ‘yan hanggang ngayon. Parang may nagawa akong kasalanan,” he explained further.

As a songwriter, Valera feels he is different as he write songs to give life to the sentiments of other people.

“Ang mga kantang ginagawa ko ay

hindi concerned sa buhay ko. Mas may kinalaman sa mga audience na pinanonood ko. Ang ibig kong sabihin, gumagawa ko for specific segment ng society. Iniisip ko, para masabi nila ang gusto nilang sabihin, ako na lang ang magsasabi sa kanila. Ganoon ‘yung paggawa ko ng kanta,” he explained.

“Kahit Maputi Na Ang Buhok Ko: The Music of Rey Valera” stars RK Bagatsing in the lead role.

EC to keep recognizing PHL seafarers, short Nursing training

MANILA, Philippines — The European Commission said it will still recognize certificates issued by the Philippines to seafarers, putting 50,000 Filipino seafarers aboard EU-flagged vessels in the clear. The European Maritime Safety Agency found the Philippines had 23 grievances, including lack of

equipment and inconsistent training of its seafarers, that it needed to address for Filipino mariners to be allowed to serve on EU ships.

Following the EU’s decision, the Philippines has also committed to improve its seafarer training and education programs

with technical support from the regional economic bloc.

Shorter Nursing training Eyed

CHED wants to offer short nursing certificate programs to help fill the needs of the healthcare system amid a nursing shortage.

The department is proposing a “BS Nursing Curriculum with Exit Credentials,” which would allow nursing students who did not finish their degree program to still work as nursing associates, community health nurses, and associate maternal and child nurses.

Marcos family creating Camelot Fantasy? Again? 🤔😏🤔

Is it possible that the pro-Marcos trilogy movies *Maid in Malacanang*, *Martyr or Murderer* & (COMING) *Mabuhay Aloha Mabuhay* are an attempt to create a Philippine version of Camelot that was used by the Kennedys?

For centuries, King Arthur and Camelot have been referenced by monarchs and politicians hoping to align themselves with this famed myth of a romanticised society, typically one led by a noble king where good always wins.

After the death of JFK in 1963, Jackie Kennedy once again employed the myth of Camelot to paint a romanticised image of his presidency, immortalising it as pioneering, progressive, even legendary.

Camelot was first publicly used by Jackie Kennedy in a *Life* magazine interview.

Now, it is Imee Marcos who is creating the mythical Camelot around her family. While the movie version is short on the glamorous side of their life and focuses on the political side, it does portray the Marcoses as innocent of any wrongdoings that happens during Ferdinand Marcos’ presidency and points the fingers at the opposition with dubious intentions.

Of course, it’s possible this attempt to romanticize their image is also an attempt to press in the minds of the Filipinos that only their family can keep the Philippines a Camelot and nobody else. With beautiful and good-looking artistas playing them in the movies, starry-eyed Filipinos might not be able to separate the artista from the politician.

Is it possible this image-beautifying is defense against the Dutertes?

In politics, there are no permanent friends or enemies, just permanent interests. So, who knows?

Between the Marcos’ glamor or Duterte’s image of dead bodies by his drug war during his whole term, who is more likely to fool the Filipinos when the election comes?

Martyr or Murderer o Fairy Tale?

I watched *Martyr or Murderer*, the second

of the trilogy about the Marcos family. The first one was *Maid in Malacanang*. The credits in the movie listed Darryl Yap and Imee Marcos as writers. In Wikipedia, only Darryl Yap was listed as writer. I find the movie well-made, entertaining, convincing and “factual-looking.” The disclaimer at the end states that everything shown in the movie were of public record. Pero, remember, just because it’s on public record, ibig sabihin it’s the truth. The movie is convincing pero it doesn’t mean you have to believe it. Remember, scam artists are convincing too. Watch it for entertainment and nothing else. 🤔

Plaque for Paying Taxes?

Pati ba naman pagbabayad ng tax sa Pilipinas, entertainment na rin? Dios Mio. May plaque of recognition pa na binibigay sa isang mall sa mga top taxpayers na artista. Ito ba strategy ng BIR to make tax evaders pay their taxes,



make it look glamorous to pay taxes? Or are they trying to make Bongbong feel guilty?

“Mr. President, we will give you a plaque of recognition if you pay your

taxes from 1982 to 1985. Makakasama niyo pa itong mga artista. Kahit iyang mga taga ABS. You can also have a selfie with them.” Meron nang FAMAS ang Pilipinas, Oscars ang Hollywood, baka sa susunod, may awards show na rin ag BIR na televised pa. Ano ba iyan? Lahat na lang, entertainment sa Pilipinas.

Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakati-haya. 😊

Jalosjos to kill Golden Egg?

Eat Bulaga is produced by TAPE corporation which is owned Congressman Romy Jalosjos who is a friend of Tony Tuviera who was given a share by RJ to run Tape. Former Congressman Romeo Jalosjos, a convicted felon was found guilty of 2 counts of statutory rape and 6 counts of acts of lasciviousness of an 11 year old girl in 1997. Now RJ wants to kick out Tito, Vic and Joey and Tony Tuviera. I know TVJ are old. But this is not sports where if an athlete gets old, they become ineffective. EB the show is a cash cow. From a business point of view, it doesn’t make sense. RJ and convicted double murderer Claudio Teehankee Jr. were two of the convicted felons pardoned by former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. GMA is still in power. We all know showbiz attracts good-looking young people, mostly from the poor sectors of society to try their luck.

So, Romy + access to young people specially girls=_?

Hay naku, kasuwerte naman nitong si Romy. Talagang itong mga Romy. So, if Romy does something “crazy,” there is his protector Gloria. Hay naku, buhay powerful nga naman sa Pilipinas. 🤔

TVJ is karibal ni Romy?

Totoo ba na the real reason daw gusto tanggalin ni Romy Jalosjos sina Tito, Vic and Joey ay dahil competition sa kanya? Napakainit na topic nito. Makainom nga muna ng Pepsi Palo... este, I mean, Cola. Pepsi cola. 🤔

‘Walang dapat baguhin’: Tito Sotto says on ‘Eat Bulaga’ amid rumored revamp

For the first time in a long time, “Eat Bulaga” hosts Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon sang the show’s theme song live amid the rumored tensions in the noontime show.

During the finals of the show’s “Little Miss Diva” segment, Tito said that Vic composed the song while Joey created the word “Eat Bulaga.”

“Para sa mga kabataan at mas bata pa sa kanila, nililinaw ko lang ha, ang nag-compose ng kantang ‘Eat Bulaga,’ si Vic Sotto,” he said.

“Ang nag-imbento ng salitang ‘Eat Bulaga,’ si Joey de Leon!” he added.

Joey replied, “Sandali, si Vic ang nag-compose ng kanta, ako ang nakaisip ng ‘Eat Bulaga,’ ano ginawa mo?”

“Ako manager!” Tito answered.

At the end of the segment, Tito said that the noontime

show needs no revamping.

“Congratulations sa production ng ‘Eat Bulaga’! Keep it up! Keep up the good work. Walang dapat baguhin sa production ng ‘Eat Bulaga,’” Tito said.

“Akin, ini-extend ko ang invitation sa inyong lahat.

Magkita-kita ulit tayo, after six years to celebrate ‘Eat Bulaga’s’ 50 years on television,” Joey said.

“Kumbidado kayo! Tuloy tayo! 50 years of ‘Eat Bulaga’ on television, mga teenagers na kayo pero ang mga bulilit dito 11 years pa lang to, after six years!” he added.

Former Congressman Romy Jalosjos is allegedly seeking to take control of Television and Production Exponents (TAPE) - which produces EB - from his business partner Tony Tuviera and the show’s original hosts Tito, Vic and Joey and kick them out.



Irony? Paolo Contis revealed he got cheated on by an ex

Paolo Contis recalled the time he found out his ex-girlfriend was cheating on him after he incidentally received a package that contained photos of her and the other guy, as seen in an interview with fellow Kapuso actors Kokoy De Santos and Royce Cabrera for Contis’ segment “Just In” last March 1.

The subject was brought up when De Santos talked about his then girlfriend of two years whom he loved deeply but broke up with because of a third party. De Santos said he caught the girl exchanging suggestive photos with the other guy.

“May ganyan ako e. Nangyari sa akin ‘yan,” Contis then said. “Nagbakasyon ‘yung isa sa mga girlfriend ko dati tapos umuwi. Nagpadala ngayon ng photo album ‘yung lalake, pa-

rang regalo. Pagbukas ko—hindi siguro alam nung lalake na ako ‘yung magre-receive nung package—puro pictures nila na sunset, nagha-halikan.”

Contis said that his ex-girlfriend, whom he seemingly hinted to also be from showbiz, did not immediately own up to her mistake and reasoned out that the other guy was just a photographer. “Nag-alibi pa e. Ayun, nalaos,” he said.





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Iron Heart stars say team and castmates have ‘zero’ attitude

We traversed the mountains of Cebu from Bonbon mountains to Sudlon some two hours away from the city to witness the elevated action scenes of The Iron Heart.

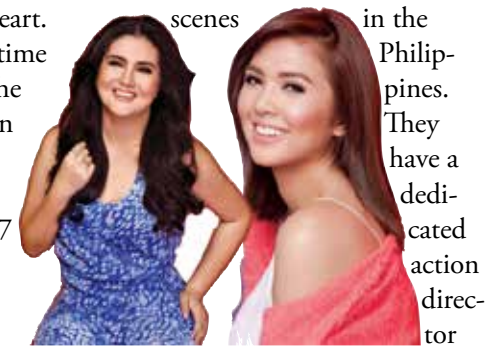
ABS-CBN’s primetime show offering from the Star Creatives division recently had its all-time high in concurrent views last Feb. 27 with almost 270,000 viewers.

Sudlon mountain was where unit one was and where lead star Richard Gutierrez had his scenes taken and we were surprised that it was so cold in the mountain that it was reminiscent of Baguio weather in December!

Richard, whose family hails from Cebu, said that it was also his first time to discover the area even though he has been going home to the province every so often.

The norm is that a show would rate at first and sustain it until the end. But The Iron Heart had another direction. “Parang ang nangyari sa The Iron Heart, habang tumatagal mas gumaganda siya and mas maraming tumatangkilik ng storya at mas nagugustuhan ng mga tao,” shared Richard. The Iron Heart also has

more demanding scenes and elevated action stunts that Star Creatives, the team and brains behind the show, are pushing to champion world-class fight scenes in the Philippines. They have a dedicated action director



Dimples Romana and Sofia Andres

Lester Pimentel to guide the cast and be consistent with the delivery of the stunts.

Good thing, Richard who plays Apollo is an expert and has zero injuries, a benchmark for a great action star.

He said, “I have been doing martial arts for a long time and very important for cinematic action ay iyong safety. So control is very important and practice.”

Richard further said that The Iron Heart proves that world-class action is also very much alive and can be achieved in the Philippines.

“We try to elevate the action sequences. Talagang gusto namin pagandahin pa dahil naniniwala kami na kaya pumantay ang Pilipino pagdating

sa mga action sa ibang bansa!” he added.

Of course, Richard said his team is perfect and his co-actors have no egos present that the vision of the show is just so doable.

Ruffa Gutierrez loses in labor complaint filed by former house helpers

Ruffa Gutierrez has reportedly lost in the labor complaint filed by two of her former house help who claimed to have been fired by the actress without giving their salaries.

The case stemmed from the complaint lodged by Gutierrez’s maids before the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) in July 2022, claiming that they were fired without giving their salaries.

TV personality Ogie Diaz also shared on his Showbiz Update vlog.

“Nanalo ‘yung dalawang kasambahay na pinaalis ni Ruffa Gutierrez sa kanyang Alabang house at nandoon ‘yung dalawa sa gate ng Ayala Alabang village. Noong Sep-

tember 2022 ay sinubukang pag-ayusin sina Ruffa at ang dalawang kasambahay pero parehong ayaw ng compromise kaya tinuloy ang kaso,” he said.

“Kilala ko naman si Ruffa. In fairness, mabait naman ang batang ‘yan. Ilang beses na kaming nagkakausap niyan at nakikita kong mabait si Ruffa pero siyempre, hindi naman ako ‘yung naging kasambahay. Sila ‘yung merong experience o kuwento about Ruffa at ngayon ay nabigyan ng pansin ng DOLE,” he pointed out.

“And I’m sure si Ruffa ay tutugon [naman] sa desisyon na ito at maliit na bagay at maliit na halaga para hindi tuparin ni Ruffa ang kanyang obligasyon doon sa dalawang kasambahay,” he further added.

The talent manager also hoped that the labor complaint would serve as a lesson to Gutierrez to treat her house helpers better.

“Sana matapos na ito. At the end of the day, siguro gusto lang patunayan nang dalawang kasambahay na hindi totoo ‘yung mga ibinibintang sa kanila noong sila’y napalayas sa bahay nina Ruffa. [Para rin] nakakahinga na sila ng maluwag sa iisipin ng tao na sila’y may kasalanan o nagnakaw sa bahay ni Ruffa,” he said.



Marco Gumabao, Kylie Verzosa explore the world of ‘sugar dating’ in new romcom film

Award-winning and box office director Jason Paul Laxamana returns with another romcom titled Baby Boy, Baby Girl starring Marco Gumabao and Kylie Verzosa.

The film goes deeper into the world of “sugar dating” where relationships are transactional—every expectation is laid out and agreed upon.

Marco Gumabao plays Seb who rose from rags to riches. With the help of becoming a “sugar baby,” he was able to afford the luxurious lifestyle that got the attention of his ex-girlfriend, Josie (Kylie Verzosa), when they crossed paths.

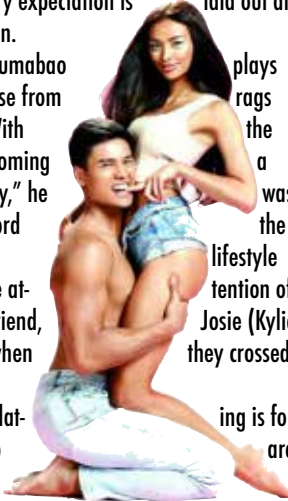
“Sugar dating is for people who are looking for

companionship, or for those who wanted to be mentored. A lavish lifestyle is also a big part of it. The requirements, like the duration of the dating and material things to be given/received of the people in social dating, are stated very clearly,” Laxamana shared.

Kylie stated she said yes to it right away.

Kylie and Director JP both enthused that Marco Gumabao is great as Seb. Asked about his reaction to the movie’s theme, Marco said that he was shocked when he first read the script, but he was also very excited to be able to put himself in the shoes of sugar babies.

“Baby Boy, Baby Girl is not just for entertainment, we wanted the film to also serve as an eye opener to many viewers about the world of sugar dating and things work in this kind of setup,” Marco said.





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Churches told: Limit virtual masses

MANILA — Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula has called on Catholic churches under the Archdiocese of Manila to limit the number of their virtual masses, urging them to strengthen their efforts to encourage the faithful to return to attending in-person masses.

Advincula reiterated the call of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for the faithful to participate in physical masses, especially during Sundays.

"Considering that 'the pandemic has weakened and our official health experts have placed the country into more relaxed health protocols... our people move freely and return to their normal life,' the resumption of the obligation of the faithful to participate in the Sunday Eucharist has naturally taken effect," Advincula said.

The Archdiocese of Manila marked on March 14 the third anniversary of the

online mass.

On Oct. 14 last year, the CBCP issued its "Encouraging the Faithful to Return to Sunday Masses in Churches" circular, pointing out that the COVID-19 circumstances already permit and oblige people to return to normal Christian life.

As part of their efforts to encourage people to attend physical masses, Advincula has issued recommendations, which include the request to parishes "to evaluate the frequency of live-streaming of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist."

He also recommended encouraging the people to continue implementing health protocols in all parish churches and all venues for liturgical celebrations to ensure that they are convinced that they are safe in attending religious events.

As for the "Act of Spiritual Communion," Advincula said this should not be prayed aloud when communion is

distributed to the faithful participating in physical masses as this devotional prayer is intended for those who are following the online masses.

"The prayer can be projected on the screen for those following the mass online. The constant catechesis on the necessity of our faithful to return to our churches for the Sunday Eucharist should be explained in our homilies and in our catechesis," the cardinal pointed out.

"The communion ministries will now say 'The Body of Christ' to each communicant. The ministers are encouraged to continue wearing their face masks, especially when distributing communion. The holy water fonts, which have been emptied during the pandemic, can now be used after the Easter vigil," he said.

Advincula assured the Catholic faithful and Church officials of his "paternal and prayerful solicitude."

BIR honors top tax paying celebs of 2022

PHILIPPINES — Several celebrities were recently honored during a ceremony hosted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) in a Quezon City mall recently.

This, for being among top tax paying personalities of 2022.

Among those cited were Coco Martin, Kathryn Bernardo, Daniel Padilla, Anne Curtis, Willie Revillame, Jed Madela, and Bugoy Drilon.

Also making it to the BIR list of top tax paying celebrities were Liza Soberano, Vic Sotto, Judy Ann Santos, Sarah Geronimo, Maja Salvador, and Michael V., among others.

In his speech, Daniel thanked the agency for the recognition.

"Maraming-maraming salamat po sa award na ito at maraming-maraming salamat sa dami naming binayaran na tax," he quipped.

Kathryn, on the other hand, said: "Hopefully, this would inspire everybody to do our responsibility bilang Pilipino na magbayad ng tax."

Anne echoed the same thing.

"I just wanna say that now I am a mother, I think it's so important that we lead by example to the future generations and encourage others to think about the progression of our country as well for the future generations that have yet to come," she said. "So, let's all lead by example and support the BIR and let's pay everything on time."

Aiko Melendez inks contract with Ogie Diaz: 'There are many beautiful things we can do together'

Despite her busy schedule as a politician, Aiko Melendez was recently welcomed as Ogie Diaz's new talent during a contract signing, as seen in Melendez's personal Instagram page.

"Just inked... @ogiediaz-talents," she said in the caption. "Sealed it with love and formality. Finally, under the wing and care of my long time friend, confidant. [I'm sure there are so many beautiful things that we still can explore together. Thank you.]"

Melendez also shared a glimpse of her contract signing with Diaz on her YouTube, where she talked about her previous talent managers prior to signing with Diaz.

The "Wildflower" star also had the oppor-

tunity to ask Diaz about his responsibilities as a talent manager.

"Dati kasi, si Tito Douglas [Quijano], he passed away then napunta ako kay Tito Wyngard Tracy and he passed away again. So, for a time, si Mother Ogie became my consultant before na naging tulay with Tito Boy [Abunda], and I lasted with Tito Boy for 15 years. Ang laking pasasalamat ko sa kanya kasi ang ganda ng pagkakahawak niya rin sa karera ko," she said.

"And then since hindi na nagmamanager si Tito Boy [ng talents], napunta ako kay Kuya Arnold Vegafria at malaki rin ang pasasalamat ko. And finally, [si Ogie Diaz]," she further explained.

Ogie's management style

Melendez asked Diaz about his management style, like if he ever

went overboard when it came to managing the career of his former ward, Liza Soberano.

Diaz and Soberano have been making headlines since the beginning of the month after the latter revealed her frustrations as an actress while contract with ABS-CBN for over a decade, and recently accused her erstwhile manager of "lying" about certain aspects of their business relationship.

One sore point that Diaz clarified was the actress' claim during an interview with Boy Abunda that she only initially got a measly 30% of her talent fee because of the proportion of Diaz's commission(30%), his co-manager and Soberano's aunt Joni's (20%), and former management Star Magic (10%), before Diaz and Joni agreed to a cut in their respective commissions.

The TV personality, however, said Soberano was able to receive 63% from her talent fee because he was only entitled to 20% commission, while Star Magic received 10% and Joni 7%. He also pointed out that it was he who ultimately decided to reduce their fees.



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Final Eraserheads Reunion Concert to take place in FirstOntario Centre

From Mykapitbahay.com

Be part of history as Eraserheads will reunite once again and perform its last concert!

cally made them one of the most influential and successful bands in the history of Filipino music.

ed by Tala Entertainment, which specializes in producing unforgettable events that are customized to the audience's

trivia game, and sang famous Eraserhead songs for the media people. They also showed upcoming events for 2023, to



Eraserheads will also be the first Filipino act to perform in FirstOntario Centre, Hamilton, ON and it is going to be the BIGGEST concert in attendance with an expected crowd of 10,000. Dubbed as the “Beatles of the Philippines,” Eraserheads is a Filipino rock band that has made a huge impact on the Filipino music scene. They have received various awards, including the 1997 MTV’s Viewer’s Choice Awards held in New York. They were the only Filipinos to have received this award, which automati-

This much-awaited concert is present-

taste. This includes live concerts, art exhibits, and experiential performances.

“An event would be nothing without the media,” as the saying goes. In line with this, Tala Entertainment held a media salu-salo to promote the concert and to celebrate the media people. They presented a video on what to expect from the Eraserheads concert, conducted a

keep us on our toes. According to Gerald Aquintey, Executive Producer of Tala Entertainment, they will be providing transportation arrangements with designated pick-up points and times for concert attendees in other cities. VVIP ticket holders will also have special privileges such as access to a VIP lounge with free food and refreshments, and a complimentary Eraserheads gift box. All other announcements and flash promos will be announced on Tala Entertainment’s website and social media channels, so stay tuned!



Cyber-libel charges from camp of ex Vic Consunji’s new alleged partner junked

MANILA, Philippines — Model Maggie Wilson revealed that a cyber-libel filed against her by Rachel Carrasco’s friend was junked. In her Instagram story, Maggie said that she received a court order saying a cyber-libel case against her filed last year has been dismissed. “Today I received an order from the court that Rachel Carrasco’s friend and business partner Patricia Kelly Parreño Librojo, who I have never met or spoken to, filed a baseless criminal cyber libel case

against me in mid-2022 has been DISMISSED,” she said. “It’s disgusting that she like others used our already over-stretched Philippines court system to shamelessly harass and intimidate me and my family,” she added. She took a swipe against Rachel and Patricia at the end of her statement. “I guess these types of people are cut from the same



cloth,” she said. Maggie’s ex-husband Victor Consunji broke his silence over his rift with his ex-wife last month. The STAR reporter and columnist Iris Gonzales said that Victor broke his silence after “increased malicious online attacks” by Maggie. “I make this statement to express once and for all my position regarding her systematic harassment and bullying of

my family, friends, colleagues and of myself and Ms. Rachel Carrasco specifically,” Victor said. “Up to this point, I have done my best to remain silent, resorting only to lawful remedies to answer unlawful acts maligned to tarnish our reputations and character. And while it is lamentable that Ms. Wilson has debased herself through social media posts and stories, it has always been my stance that this abhorrent behavior is underserving of my attention,” he added.

Is Gerald Anderson ready to marry Julia Barretto?

Actor Gerald Anderson admitted that he’s already entertaining the thought of getting married at this point. “Well, everything that I’m doing right now is geared towards that,” he averred. “I’m no longer 25 years old who will focus more on my career. Everything that I’m doing for my showbiz career and my venturing into various businesses is leading to that point,” he added. Asked if the lucky girl is current girlfriend Julia Barretto, the 34-year-old actor answered: “Yes, I’m definite that she is!”

What made him think that Julia is already “The One”? “I guess you will feel it. If your relationship is working. For one, you will discover that something’s changing in you. You feel that your priorities are changing or your priorities became clearer to you. You know the old saying: ‘You just know.’ You’ll feel extremely different. It’s hard to explain it. But the feeling is different.” Gerald clarified though that he and Julia are not yet engaged. Since he admitted his relationship with Julia in

March 2021, bashers relentlessly hit them. How does he handle such predicament? “It may sound cliché but I turn such negative energy into positive and I think it worked for me. I don’t know if there’s



a sense in that but I’ve lasted this long in the ‘biz not just because of the fans’ support but also due to people’s criticisms or pessimistic remarks like, ‘He’s not good!’ or ‘He won’t make it!’ It’s kind of weird but I am able to translate those into positivism,” he said. Sharing a piece of advice with the new crop of showbiz wannabes, Gerald stated that one should not feel afraid and be brave enough to face bashers. “It’s rampant nowadays. People will bash you in everything that you do so just stay positive all the time,” Gerald ended.



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Rightsizing bill gets House nod

MANILA — Voting 292-3, the House of Representatives yesterday approved on third and final reading a priority bill of President Marcos, which seeks to rightsize by way of streamlining the 1.6-million strong bureaucracy.

Administration lawmakers approved House Bill 7240 or the National Gov-

ernment Rightsizing Program that would carry out what they called “rightsizing” in all government offices to save about P15 billion a year in public funds.

Reps. Rufus Rodriguez and Stella Luz Quimbo – chair of the House committee on constitutional amendment and senior vice chair of the appropriations commit-

tee, respectively – said the bill deserves support. The measure is expected to save almost P15 billion in taxpayers’ money yearly. Rodriguez, of the second district of Cagayan de Oro City, said there are many redundant agencies, councils, offices, task forces and similar executive and legislative creations that could be abolished or

merged without sacrificing the functions of the surviving entities.

“Just look at the annual budget and one will find that there are councils and offices in many departments that overlap or duplicate the functions of the bureaus or agencies under these departments,” Rodriguez said.

Why live-in arrangement the biggest challenge in ‘KimJe’s’ relationship

In 2020, real- and reel-life couple Kim Molina and Jerald Napoles said the biggest challenge when they decided to live-in was convincing Kim’s parents. Kim and Jerald eventually convinced her parents that the setup was ideal. “We just had to build trust. When I got sick, Je took care of me. I guess that’s how he won their hearts,” the actress said.

Jerald, 40, added: “I simply explained to her parents what was happening in the Philippines at the time. I was very straightforward. I told them what Kim needed, and what I was willing to do for her. I guess that was enough for them.”

Click

What made them click in spite of the nine-year age gap. Jerald said: “She is everything, plus she’s someone with a good sense of humor. Everything I’m looking for in a girl,

I found in her.”

Kim, on the other hand, said: “I like his ‘laban’ attitude. For example, he was given a project recently that required him to swim. He doesn’t know how to swim, but he bravely dove into the water because it’s something he really had to do.” “Also, we share the same life goals,” she added.

When asked to react to the idea that he has put on hold some of his personal plans, particularly of finally settling down, for the sake of Kim, Jerald said: “I can’t say that’s accurate. I also believe there’s a right timing for everything. For example, we both got affected financially by the pandemic. It came right after the hit ‘Jowable’ and ‘Ang Babaeng Walang Pakiramdam,’

which also became a hit. If not for those successful projects and our viral YouTube videos, we’re not sure if we’d be offered ‘Team A’ today. It’s all about life’s right timing.”

Jerald was referring to the sitcom “Team A: Happy Fam, Happy Life.” In the series directed by Mervyn Brondial, the couple play parents to their daughter Yeye (Gianna Iguiron). The series, said Brondial, is inspired by the 1970s sitcom “John en Marsha,” which aired on TV for

a record 17 years.

“That’s the goal,” said Jerald. “I hope we would be given the same opportunity. For me, to do a project like this—something that has the potential to become iconic—with my girlfriend is really a dream come true.”

Unique partnership

Their partnership is quite unique. Not only are they workmates and lovers, they are also business partners. “We started as workmates in ‘Rak of Aegis,’ which was where we first fell in love. When we formed our startup business, it felt like a lot of things were happening all at the same time. Jerald said they would also make sure to detach themselves from the KimJe love team when they’re not at work. “This is so that we would not bring in stuff we don’t need as partners, or stuff we don’t need as workmates.

“When we start getting too affected by the frenzy around us, we would distance ourselves from each other. She’d say, ‘Je, umalis ka nga muna!’ That was actually one of the problems we had to resolve during the lockdowns. Whenever I would get banished from the house, I also couldn’t leave and would just stay by the gate,” Jerald said laughing.





DR. GUILLERMO DE VILLA

MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 23, 2023

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Why Chavit Singson did not buy Miss Universe

MANILA, Philippines — Former Ilocos Sur Governor Luis “Chavit” Singson revealed that the Miss Universe franchise was offered to him but he declined to buy it.

“Binibigay sa akin pero hindi ko binili kasi masyadong matrabaho. Sabi ko, tutulong na lang ako,” he said.

He said that Miss Universe’s new owner Anne Jakrajutatip is inviting him to Thailand for a meeting.

“Binibigay na nga sa akin, ba’t ko bibilin e hindi ko nga maasikaso? Right now, binenta nila, iniimbata ako ng nakabili. Iniimbata ‘ko to help them,” he said.

Chavit recalled the time that he hosted the Miss Universe in the country last 2016.

“Kahit malugi ng konti okay na sa

akin kako kasi magandang advertisement sa ating bansa,” he said.

Chavit said he deposited a non-refundable \$1 million (over P55 million) fee. He then deposited another \$5 million (over P275 million).

“Nakuha na ‘yung 1 million (dollars) ko so sinabi na lahat,” he said.

But Miss Universe told him to deposit another \$6 million (over P330 million) for the pageant’s and its candidates’ other expenses in the Philippines, including the country’s hosting.

“That’s how I got the Miss Universe. Pero according to them, that’s the most successful Miss Universe ever. So after that, kinausap ako, ‘You can do it in any country you want, no more down payment may discount pa’,” he said.

“Nalugi pero sulit!”



What’s the craziest rumor that Nadine Lustre has heard about herself?

Nadine Lustre said that the rumor of her being pregnant is the craziest one.

“This happens every year. I don’t know why. I don’t know how. People just decide that I am pregnant every year. I don’t even look like it,” she relayed.

“If I am pregnant though, I would happily announce it to the world but sadly guys, I am not pregnant. I am not pregnant every year.”

Nadine was also asked what’s something that people don’t know about her.

She responded: “I guess that I am a ‘clutter head,’ does that makes sense? Because I feel like people see me like as someone very composed, someone who knows what she wants. I’m actually the

total opposite of that.”

“Because people see my Instagram, and they’re like you’re so creative, you’re so put together. I’m actually not. I’m actually all over the place,” she confessed.

Nadine also opened up about her most memorable trip to date.

“It would definitely be my trip to France (with her non-showbiz boyfriend Christophe Bariou) back in March of 2022. It was my first time doing a proper road trip outside of the Philippines and it was amazing. It was a winter tour,” she shared. She added: “It’s amazing, good food, good company of course, met a



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Life’s brighter under the sun

lot of new people, saw new places, new experiences as well so that’s definitely it.”

On her favorite spot in Siargao, she relayed, “It would be the mangroves near Secret Beach.”

Nadine has her own place in Siargao and she moved to the island in 2021.

In an interview April 2022, the actress shared how she would compare living in the city and on the island.

“I think people are much more chill on the island. It’s probably the lifestyle, probably the saltwater, I don’t know.

That’s what I noticed comparing people here in Manila and in Siargao,” she said.

Nadine also stated that she appreciates the slower pace of life in Siargao.

“Life here in the city is so fast, like everyone is rushing. Even me ha, I feel the same way, I feel like I have to rush this, this, this. It’s never-ending, it’s tiring. But when you’re on the island, parang everything is so chill and slow, save [for] work. Dito kasi pak, pak, pak, done. But there it’s like, ‘Ah, okay, nice,” she stated.

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I've learned from my past mistakes

Nathalie Hart

Nathalie Hart has promised herself that she's not going to talk about her non-showbiz fiancé — and love life in general — until she's married.

"Huwag nating pag-usapan. That's a part of me that's already out of showbiz," Nathalie requested the press during an intimate group interview about her comeback film, Viva Films' Kunwari... Mahal Kita, which opened in cinemas last month.

After her relationship with the father of her child broke down, the 30-year-old actress found love again and got engaged to her Australian boyfriend last year.

But don't expect her to be as candid about it as before.

Nathalie explained: "I feel like before I was a lot open. Ikakasal na ako, then a week before the wedding date, we canceled. So, I feel like mas maganda na kasal na ako before I share a lot of things.

"I've learned so much from my past mistakes na 'di mo naman kailangan sabihin sa lahat. Actually, 'di naman



nakakahiya sa public, but nakakahiya sa pamilya mo.

"At the end of the day, I've learned to really take a step back and wait. Kung para sa 'yo talaga ang taong yan, para sa 'yo... Kung kami talaga, eh di kami na, and then that person will have to be a stepfather to my child," she said.

Nathalie honestly admitted that it's not been easy to "restart" this part of her life due to past "trauma" but more importantly because she's a mom now to her four-year-old girl Penelope, whose feelings she has to take into account in everything that she does.

According to her, she's not "hiding" her relationship because she's ashamed of it. Rather, she's doing this for her daughter.

"Now, it's not only me, I also have a child to think about. So parang ayoko ng paguluhin ang lahat ng bagay (I don't want to complicate things)," Nathalie shared.

Interestingly, her experiences in life are somehow mirrored in her new film.

"I actually felt this (role) is coming from my real experience, especially as I realized a lot of things during this pandemic and from my last relationship. Akala ko wala ng pag-asa...

"In Kunwari... Mahal Kita, my character, ang yabang-yabang ko sa una, pero ayoko rin naman makipag-hiwalay.

"Then, I realized while doing the film, I was actually looking at myself and I was like naranasan ko na 'to dati. Naki-paghiwalay ako pero na-realize ko, ako pala ang mali. Hindi mo dapat sukuan ang mga bagay na hindi naman dapat. It takes maturity. So, this movie is coming from real experiences from my life. It's kind of funny."

Besides acting, Nathalie is also returning to school this year.

"I'm doing an online school in Sydney and I'm taking up Psychology.."

Meanwhile, Kunwari... Mahal Kita officially restarts the Fil-Australian's acting career. She took a lengthy break to focus on her daughter.

Oh my God, is this me?

With her daughter a little bit older now, the actress who is under the wing of veteran talent manager Leo Dominguez felt ready to dip her feet into showbiz again.

"I really want to try it again this time. (Penelope) has her own life now. She has her own schedule. I have time for myself. She tells me how she feels, what she wants to do. She's a lot easier to handle now than when she was a child," Nathalie shared.

She could say that motherhood mellowed her down.

"It gave me a lot of responsibilities. Before, okay lang ka-hit among oras ako magising basta walang trabaho. Now, it's different. You do have to plan your day. It actually made me a healthier person," she reflected.

"I'm not saying that I had vices. I'm more mentally stable after having a child. It slowed me down, gave me purpose. It gave me responsibilities and made me a better person."

With her film being released this Women's Month, Nathalie has some words of encouragement for moms struggling to raise their child or children on their own.

"Being a single mother is not easy. I have a lot of respect for you, guys. I am also part of that. Do not put yourself down. At the end of the day, there is much more to life and you have a child that's going to look up to you one day and you have to make that person proud na kinaya mong lahat," she said.

Shocked over fraud

Daughters of veteran actresses release statement on fraud claims

Maritess Gutierrez, daughter of veteran actress Gloria Romero as well as Caridad Sanchez's daughter Cathy Babao released statements saying that their respective mothers had never issued support for a type of essential oil that claimed to benefit the mental and physical well-being of the elderly.

The essential oil's site featured "testimonials" of the two actresses, as well as those of a supposed neurologist, a physician, a housewife, a college student and a high school student.

"It's terrible how these alleged companies are using the names and faces of two highly respected actresses. What's worse



Gloria Romero (left) and Caridad Sanchez

is that my mom and Tita Caridad are super seniors already!" Gutierrez said.

On the other hand, Babao, who learned about the ad from a friend, was shocked that the company would take advantage of two senior actresses who are now quietly living their lives away from the limelight.

"I knew right away it was a fraud because my mom doesn't even know

about that product, and the testimonial attributed to her does not sound like her at all. The bigger sin for me is that they are taking advantage of Tita Gloria and my mom's credibility to sell a product to other seniors who might be easily fooled by their false and fraudulent claims," she said.

Gutierrez and Babao are reportedly set to take legal action against the fraudulent online advertisement.

It's Showtime's Vice Ganda elated at 'Eat Bulaga!' Dabarkads' birthday greeting

Sa isang pambihirang pagkakataon, tila natuldukan na ang noontime-show battle na dekadang nama-mayani sa mundo ng telebisyon sa Pilipinas.

Ngayong Biyernes, March 31, 2023, bigla na lamang binanggit at binati ni Joey de Leon ng Eat Bulaga! ang It's Showtime host na si Vice Ganda sa kaarawan nito.

Ipinagdiriwang ni Vice ang kanyang ika-47 kaarawan ngayong araw.

Sa live episode ng Eat Bulaga! kanina ay nabanggit ni Joey na birthday ng kanyang ina.

Kaya binati rin ng Dabarkads na sina Jose Manalo, Wally Bayola, Paolo Ballesteros, Ryan Agoncillo, at Maja Salvador ang ina ng veteran TV host-comedian.

Dagdag ni Joey, "Birthday din ni Vice Ganda ata?"

At binati na rin ng ibang Dabarkadas ng "happy birthday" si Vice, na host ng katapat nilang programa.

Napanood ito ni Vice at hindi mapagsidlan ang saya na kanyang nararamdaman.

Sabi niya sa live episode ng It's Showtime ngayon ding araw: "I'm so happy. Binati nila ako ng happy birthday sa Eat Bulaga!.

"Kay Tito Joey, Sir Joey de Leon, maraming-maraming-maraming salamat.

"Binati nila ako dun, ang saya. Mabuhay kayo Eat Bulaga!, more years to come! I love you."



Komento naman ni Anne Curtis, "Ito pala ang dulot ng chill, no?"

Pagsang-ayon ni Vice: "Ang chill. The world is

chilling.

"I love you Dabarkads. I love you Eat Bulaga! Sa lahat sa inyo diyan, maraming-maraming salamat."

Malayung-malayo na ang sitwasyong ito sa mga parinigan nina Vice at Joey noon.

Noong October 2015, may mga matalinhagang tweets si Joey tungkol sa "kabayo," na ayon sa maraming netizens ay pinaparinggan ng Eat Bulaga! host ang It's Showtime host na si Vice.

Madalas kasing ikumpara ni Vice ang sarili sa kabayo, na siya ring biro sa kanya.

Sumikat din nang todo sa showbiz si Vice nang gawin ang pelikulang Petrang Kabayo noong 2010.

Ontario Fil-Can Professionals Associations Bid Adieu to Congen Orontes Castro

By Tony A. San Juan, OCT

TORONTO - In an extraordinary collective demonstration and grateful expression of support, admiration, and love to the Philippine Consul General Orontes V. Castro, 8 Filipino- Canadian professionals associations in Ontario jointly held a despedida party for the genial and kind Filipino diplomat. The event was organized in honour of the departing Consul General who completed his posting after 3 1/2 years heading the Philippine diplomatic service in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and is getting another foreign service assignment.

The goodbye event was held at Improve Canada in Vaughan, Ontario on March 11, 2023. With more than 70 guests, professional association heads, and community leaders in attendance, the evening program, ably hosted by Architect Ronaldo Pompa started with the singing of the Canadian and Philippine national anthems, as well as the reading of the Land Acknowledgment. Accountant Sonny Martinez, one of the event's chief organizers, made the opening remarks and was followed by several speakers and leaders coming from the 7



PTAC's R. Apilado, T. San Juan & C. Drapeza with Phil. ConGen O. Castro.

different Filipino professional associations.

Represented by their respective presidents at the party, the following organizations who participated are the 1) Association

of Filipino Canadian Accountants(AFCA), 2) Association of Filipino Canadian Engineers(AFCE), 3) Filipino Construction Professionals of Ontario(FilConPro), 4) Integrated Filipino Canadian Nurses Association(IFCNA), 5) Philippine Teachers Association of Canada(PTAC), 6) Society of Physiotherapists with Foreign Credentials (SPFC), 7) United Architects of the Philippine-Ontario Chapter(UAP) and 8) Peace Officers Living in Canada Integrated Association (Policia). Special guests were Joe Shokour and James Rice of IBT College-Toronto.

Among those who lauded and gave their words of appreciation and "be seeing you again", sa muling pagkikita-kita, to Congen O. Castro were PEng. Gil Galang of AFCE; CPA-CGA Sonny Z. Martinez of AFCA; P.Eng. Richard Sison of FilConPro; RN Jennifer Alog Lopez of IFCNA; OCT Gelito Drapeza of PTAC; Jacqueline Rotela of SPFC; and Ana Aclo of UAP.

In his response, Congen O. Castro was grateful for the honour bestowed on him. He expressed that he was truly happy and proud

to have encouraged and assisted in "planting the seeds" for a united organization of professionals "looking in and looking out", thus helping out their fellow kababayans get into the foreign credential recognition journey to be able to practice their professions and careers in the province. Rightly, those present are in full agreement that the initiative put forward by the ConGen was definitely a great accomplishment leading to the historic first convention last year of "Integrating Filipino Professionals in Canada", a productive step forward in "elevating the profile of Filipinos", indeed.

ConGen Castro received tokens of appreciation and gifts from the various professional organizations handed out by their respective Presidents and executive officers. The highlight of the gathering was the presentation of a "Plaque of Appreciation" and a goodbye cake to the ConGen for his valuable contribution and steadfast support & encouragement to the Filipino-Canadian officers and members of the organizations of internationally-educated professionals.

It was certainly a memorable evening of paalam & praises, shared laughter & emotion, professional networking, and fellowship, combined with group dance performances, line dancing, and fine foods.



1. Let's Dance Live & Enjoy Life & FV Foods pose with outgoing Consul General Orontes Castro (seated in suit); 2. STANDING L-R, Steve Pagao, Cecille Araneta, FV Foods owner Mel Galeon and Paul Arena; SEATED L-R Gemma Pascual, Nestor Arellano, Congen Orontes Castro, FCT's Wendy Arena

Why RK Bagatsing didn't want to meet Rey Valera before filming screen musical

RK Bagatsing, who plays singer-composer Rey Valera in the screen musical "Kahit Maputi na ang Buhok Ko," said he purposely did not meet the iconic artist prior to filming because he was sure he'd "give in to pressure and commit major acting mistakes."

"I said I'd rather meet him when we're done with the film. Anyway, there were enough materials on him to study—YouTube clips, his concerts and his interviews. I also believe that there's a part of him in all the songs he wrote and sang, you only have to listen. When you play music, your mood shifts instantly. It's the same when you're acting," RK told reporters during a recent gathering where Rey was also present.

'Light, easy'
Joven Tan's "Kahit Maputi na ang Buhok Ko: The Music of Rey Valera" is an official entry to the 1st Summer Metro Manila Film Festival, which will run from April 8 to April 18.

RK, who said he was aware that he wasn't the first choice for the role, added that he also doubted his acting capabilities in the beginning. "I told them (producers) that I sing, but I'm not that good, so I might not be the actor for the project. But they explained that the songs were prerecorded and that they just want someone to give heart to each of these songs. 'That's why we need you,' they said. At this point in my career, I don't want to always be in my comfort zone. The idea

of starring in this movie is making me nervous, which is exactly what I want to feel before I agree to take on a project," RK explained.

Filming, however, was surprisingly "light and easy," according to the actor. "I'm actually trying to remember which part was difficult to do, but I can't think of any apart from having to wear a wig because it was too hot on the set. I just felt like I went to the set to listen to good music. I really enjoyed working on this. Direk Joven is also very easy to work with," he told reporters.

Inspires, gives hope
Prior to the special screening for the media and cast members held last Saturday night at Gateway Cinemas in Quezon City, RK said a more intimate one had been arranged especially for Rey some two weeks ago. This was also where the two personally met. "Coming in, I couldn't hide my nervousness. When we got together, I couldn't express well what I wanted to say to him because I was so intimidated. In my mind, I kept saying, 'This is him ... the man I portrayed, the person the entire movie is based on!' In fact, Sir Rey talked to me



Bagatsing (right) with singer-composer Rey Valera

briefly, but what he said didn't register in my head at all. That's how affected I was."

He continued: "While we were all watching the movie, he would look at his side—to where Direk Joven and I were seated—and would flash a thumbs up. After seeing the entire movie, he smiled at us and said, 'This actually inspires and gives hope

to those who are dreaming."

When asked what songs of Rey he was most familiar with, the 34-year-old actor said: "We are all able to relate to his songs depending on what we're going through at the moment. At one point, there's a line, or a verse, or an entire song, that we feel reflects what we're going through. He doesn't just write about his personal experiences, but also of the people around him. I kept saying 'Kahit Maputi na ang Buhok Ko' is a favorite, but right now, I am also able to relate to 'Tayong Dalawa' and 'Malayo Pa ang Umaga.'"

'Works in progress'

RK's girlfriend, actress Jane Oineza, was present during the media screening and was able to watch the film for the first time. Prior to the screening, RK said: "Jane told me she's very proud of me and even pointed

out that a lot of Hollywood movies on famous musicians have been released lately, like 'Elvis,' 'Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody' and 'Rocketman,' and this is like our own version."

"Everything is great," said RK when asked to share something about the status of their relationship. "If there's one thing that I'm happy about, it's her career. A lot of exciting things are coming her way soon. We'd rather focus on that. We've been together for a while now and if you ask me, the secret is to always remember that we are both 'works in progress.' Nobody is perfect. The more you disagree on things, the more you should promise to give each other your unconditional love." When Jane was asked to react to RK's performance in the movie, she said: "I'm so proud, especially because I know how much he prepared for this project. I can't believe I've finally seen the finished product. Rey Valera songs were on loop in all of our speakers. Whenever I'd see him after shooting, he would make me hear a different song by Sir Rey and tell me stories about his experiences related to that song. I not only know the stories behind all these songs, but tonight, I got to see him perform them, as well."

Jane added: "All RK wanted was to make Sir Rey proud. I guess he has done that. As for me, it's hard to pick a favorite Rey Valera song but, right now, I keep singing in my head the song 'Ako si Superman.' It's for RK, for being with me, for saving me, and for helping me survive life, especially during the pandemic."

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Model-actress and former “Pinoy Big Brother” housemate Lou Yanong welcomed with glee her role in “The Iron Heart” as it offered her the chance to do action routines.

As Rea, the head of security of Dimples Romana’s character Selene, Yanong gets to dabble in action scenes, something she loves to the hilt.

Lou Yanong fulfills dream to get to do action scenes

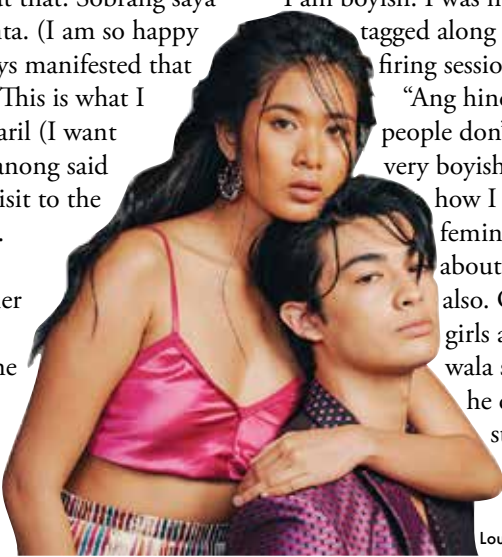
“I am so excited about that. Sobrang saya ako na doon ako napunta. (I am so happy that I got there). I always manifested that role. Ito ang gusto ko. (This is what I want). Gusto ko may baril (I want that there are guns),” Yanong said during our second set visit to the series’ location in Cebu.

Yanong revealed that she tagged along with her dad when he was gun firing which was why she enjoyed immensely the military challenge they once had inside the Big Brother house.

“I enjoyed it because

I am boyish. I was nine years old when I tagged along with my dad during his firing sessions,” she said.

“Ang hindi alam ng tao (What people don’t know is that) I am very boyish. What I show online is how I model and how I am so feminine. But they don’t know about me is am very boyish also. Growing up, we are three girls and ang dad ko feeling ko wala siyang lalaki (I feel that he doesn’t have a son). So I stepped out, naawa ako sa dad ko. (I took pity on my dad). I told him, you



Lou Yanong and Andre Brouillette

need company when you do firing. You need someone when you practice it,” she recalled.

With this, she perfectly enjoyed a scene in the series where she had to engage in gun battle to protect Romana’s character.

“It’s empowering,” she said about the scene. I had to protect Selene. So, parang nasa gitna ako, nakikipagbarilan (It was like I was in the middle, gun fighting),” she recalled.

She credits the action team of “The Iron Heart” for the seamless action and fight scenes.

“They are so detailed and they will not stop until it is perfect. And it’s a teamwork really. They will not move on until it’s perfect,” she said.

Vilma Santos, Christopher de Leon’s reunion film explores ‘mature love’

“A love story for all seasons.”

That’s how some press described When I Met You in Tokyo, the official big-screen comeback of “Star for All Seasons” Vilma Santos, which also happens to be her reunion film with Christopher de Leon after almost 20 years.

It’s a fitting label considering that this love story is “age appropriate” for its lead stars. Meaning to say, it’s a movie that explores mature romance or falling in love a little later in life.

“It’s a love story na nasa edad namin. Hindi kami magbabata-bataan dito,” said Vilma during a recent presscon.

“It’s a good comeback for me after seven years of not being visible in showbiz... Yes, it’s a love story for all seasons. And I think yung team namin ni Boyet (Christopher) is a team for all seasons. And we’re very thankful for the trust,” she added.

In an industry where ageism is still a reality and senior stars are often being boxed into certain roles, Vilma believes it’s more important than ever to tell Filipino audiences stories like When I Met You in Tokyo.

Admit it or not, love stories that grace the Philippine screens are mostly associated with youth. In Hollywood, however, there are more and excellent examples of films that venture into the love lives of older couples such as Something’s Gotta Give starring Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton or Our Souls At Night featuring Robert Redford and Jane Fonda.

Vilma said, “I think kasi ang Filipino audience, may kultura tayo kung minsan na ‘pag nagkaka-edad na, parang sa kanila hindi na famous, hindi na nabibigyan ng – how will you say this? – not naman importance but parang nale-lessen yung popularity mo, or parang hindi ka na pwede ma-in love when you age.

“Unlike in the States, the older you grow, the more respect they give you and the more they honor you and lahat ng achievements mo ng nagawa. And they don’t care even if you’re old.”

She cited also the film of Redford and Fonda as example, which she noted is proof that the more you age, “mas nirerespeto sila and nabibigyan sila ng pagkakataon to do good movies.”

“(There’s also) Clint Eastwood, who is a director pa and look at Meryl Streep, even if they look older, they’re still being given importance by their viewers there. Hindi yung itsura, but ang kakayahan nung actor (is being valued). They’re lucky because even if they’re older, binibigyan sila ng pagkakakilala sa kakayahan nila... Ganun ang taas ng pagtingin sa more mature actors in the States,” Vilma further reflected.

“Unfortunately here, parang hindi pa tanggap yun, no? Parang kapag nagkaka-edad ka ng konti, you’re just good for roles na mga senior, parang lola ka nalang, either mother or auntie ka. But this time, sa gagawin namin ni Boyet, we want to prove that even if we’re both 35 years old (laughs), even with our age and our generation, you can still fall in love.



Ed Tubale celebrates his birthday with family at Fishman Lobster Restaurant



“Gusto namin bigyan ng pagkakataon ang mga Titos and Titas that you can still fall in love, be in love and be loved. Yun ang gusto namin gawin sa pelikula namin ni Boyet. So walang age-age dito, once you feel it – once you fall in love – you show it and you give it.”

Christopher readily agreed that age is not a barrier when it comes to romance.

“Love has no boundaries. If you’re older and you fall in love, you know better. You’re more mature,

you know how to handle stuff already. And the love, the joy would still be there,” he said.

But for the first time, the veteran actor admitted to having special feelings for Santos in the past, as seen in a clip of “Vilma, Anim na Dekada” 60th anniversary special hosted by TV host Boy Abunda, which was uploaded on ABS-

CBN Entertainment’s YouTube channel.

As the veteran actors looked back on their fondest memories together, Abunda asked Santos and de Leon to improvise a scene as a way of sharing why they never ended up together despite starring as partners in several films through the years.

“Alam ko na sana tayo, pero noong mga panahon na ‘yun, maraming naniligaw sa iyo. Naging boyfriend mo si ganito, si ganoon,” de Leon began. “Ako naman, noong libre ka na, ang girlfriend ko na si ganito. Kung sana, pareho tayong libre noon or if you were free and we’re not engaged to anybody else, siguro I think, what do you think?”

The veteran actress noted that while she and de

Leon ended up with their respective partners, they will always remain as good friends. Both of them are now happily married – Santos to former senator now Batangas Rep. Ralph Recto, and de Leon to actress Sandy Andolong.

“Alam mo, ‘Yet,” Santos said, addressing de Leon with the shortened version of his nickname, Boyet. “Pana-panahon lang ‘yan. Nagkataon lang na ‘yung time when we were close, we’re very happy together. It’s just that nagkaroon lang tayo ng commitments. But I still believe that the love and respect will stay. So, let’s just wait for the right time. And I also believe in, di man siguro nagkatuluyan, there’s such thing as platonic love, diba,” Santos said.

Carlo’s tips to develop good working relationship with costars

You can be both professional and genuine at the same time,” said Carlo Aquino when asked how he has managed to maintain a good working relationship with all of his leading ladies in the almost 30 years he has been working as an actor.

o lead to anything romantic,” he explained.

Carlo is currently promoting another romantic film, “Love You Long Time,” this time, with newcomer Eisel Serrano. The movie, directed by JP Habac, is an entry to the 1st Summer Metro Manila Film Festival.

Building chemistry

“Of course, it’s important to work on having chemistry with the lead actress, but it’s also necessary to have a good relationship with the other cast members,” said Carlo, admitting that chemistry with Eisel required more effort because while their characters would have long conversations, they don’t really meet physically.

In the film, Eisel is Ikay, a young romance screenwriter whose recent heartbreak leads to writer’s block until she meets and falls in love with a mysterious guy named Yuri (Carlo) through an old push-to-talk phone.

“Admittedly, it’s harder to build chemistry with Carlo because it’s still better if the person you’re talking to is actually right in front of you,” said Eisel.

“But through Carlo’s support and everybody’s, I was able to pull it off.”

Carlo agreed by saying: “I also absorb my coactor’s emotions by looking into her eyes, but the shooting setup we had prevented this. There were times when the production team would bring Eisel and me together so she could throw lines with me, just so I’d know the emotion she was giving for that particular scene. Going more technical, the team would also show me how her scenes were shot so I’d have an idea of the camera blocking and timing.”

“Love You Long Time” was shot in Baguio City and Atok, Benguet, in 2021 during the strictest implementation of the pandemic lockdowns. Carlo said they had no chance to visit tourist spots in these areas during the two weeks it took them to finish the movie.

Despite the circumstance, Eisel said she was grateful to have had the chance to get to know Carlo better.

“I used to be an introvert. I guess this was also why building chemistry required so much effort from me. Ilag ako sa tao. I actually don’t like participating in Q&As. These days, I’ve started to be more open, especially to my coactors. I guess the realization

came with age,” said the 37-year-old actor.

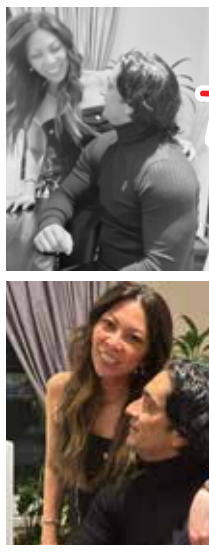


Aquino (left) and Eisel Serrano at a recent media gathering

Collaborative effort Carlo then said he has no qualms about giving acting tips, but only to those who would seek him out personally. “I don’t want to appear high

and mighty, especially because we have our directors to guide us. When I was new in the business, I was fortunate enough to have been given the opportunity to grow. I didn’t mind when Eisel would sometimes ask me questions. Making a film is a collaborative effort,” he pointed out.

Meanwhile, Eisel admitted to feeling starstruck and intimidated by Carlo in the beginning. “I didn’t expect we’d end up being close friends after the project. He is now someone I can call or chat with. He never made me feel that he’s the more experienced one and that I’m just a newcomer. He made me feel comfortable to be around him right away,” she recalled.



Happy 20th Anniversary Len & Marie



Marco Gumabao on GF Cristine Reyes: She's 'wife material'

While Marco Gumabao isn't denying that what he and Cristine Reyes have right now is "something special," the actor still feels reluctant to put a label on their relationship.

"That puts a lot of pressure on the relationship. The thing is we're both happy. We're not seeing other people... But yeah, I'm just not into labels," he told reporters at a presscon for a comedy series "Kurdapya."

And should things get "official" between them, people will know about it "when the time is right," added the 28-year-old hunk.

Marco and Cristine aren't hiding the fact that they're dating—"what you see is what you get." "We don't wear shades or try to obscure our identities. If people see us, then they see us," he said.

But still, they don't want to attract unnecessary attention. "Right now, we just want to enjoy our time together without other people sticking their noses in. I want a happy and quiet life," he said. "We're both single. We're not stepping on other people. It's just better to keep things private."

What attracted him to Cristine? She's "girl-friend- or wife-material," for one. "She's very kind. Walang arte. She's fun to be with wherever you go. She's loving and caring," said Marco, who doesn't mind the fact that Cristine already has a daughter from a past relationship.

"She's not the first woman to be a single parent. And there's nothing wrong with being one," he stressed.

Reason for bullying

Meanwhile, because bullying is one of the themes "Kurdapya" touches on, Marco was teased and mocked by his classmates when his father, Dennis Roldan, was sent to jail for kidnapping in 2005.

"That was the time when everyone in the school who wanted to bully me finally found a reason to do so. I also made sure to show that just because my father got jailed, didn't mean they had the right to bully me," he said.



There was a time, though, when he felt isolated. In a way, that experience prepared Marco for the constant scrutiny celebrities experience on social media.

"As a public personality, your every move is being watched. And they can comment about whatever you do. I laugh off their comments.

And sometimes, if I have free time, I engage with them, just for fun. Sayang naman ang effort nila!

"Social media has opened up new venues for bullying. So let's always think about what we say. Think before you click and speak," he said

'Wala na kong pera': David Licaucio admits why he accepted 'Maria Clara at Ibarra' role

Kapuso actor David Licaucio revealed that he almost quit showbiz before getting the Fidel role in the hit series "Maria Clara at Ibarra."

In an interview with Ogie Diaz, David said he wanted to stop showbiz because his love for business has overtook his love for acting. "Never ko 'to naisip buong buhay ko. Kasi nga, bago mag 'Maria Clara,' Mama Ogie, gusto ko na mag-stop," he said. "Parang na-overtake na 'yung love ko sa business 'yung acting eh," he added.

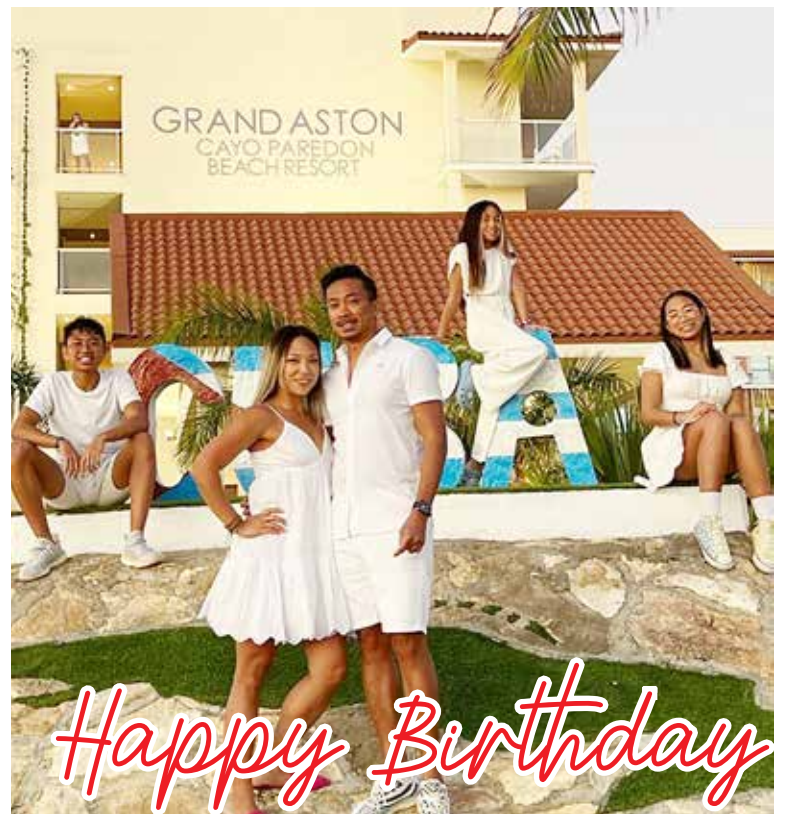
He, however, decided to accept the role because he has no money anymore because he invested all his money to business.

"In-accept ko 'tong 'Maria Clara,' honestly, kasi wala na kong pera," he said.

David said he's grateful for the show and its fans.

"Nakakatuwa rin na minsan 'yung mga fans, parang sasabihin nila sa'yo na, 'dahil sa'yo David, nawala 'yung anxiety ko,'" he said.

"Yun 'yung magpapa-energize sa 'yo eh. 'Di ba nakakatuwa yun eh? Na you're making people happy," he added.



Happy Birthday Marvin Torreno



Rodney & Chyrell Ronquillo celebrate their 16th anniversary at Mandarin with family & friends.

‘I was raised very American except for the rice!’
Vanessa Hudgens



Vanessa Hudgens soaks up the sun with mom, sister in El Nido

VANESSA from page 1

make her way here, she shared what she knew about the country and culture growing up. On her mom’s side, Vanessa’s Filipino roots are from Misamis Occidental and Cebu.

“I feel like I was definitely raised very American, except for all the rice, and the Adobo and Pancit!” Vanessa confessed.

“I mean, it’s always about the families. You know very much about the closeness of your family, how when someone gets married, they like move into a family home... You don’t leave the house, you know, everybody sticks together. But like I didn’t really know much about like the history, the lineage and like what the vibe was, honestly,” she said.

But now that she’s gotten older and looking to settle down, the actress who got engaged early this year to baseball star Cole Tucker wants to explore her Filipino side more.

“I’m in my 30s now. I’m thinking about raising a family and I want to be able to like, know my heritage, so that I can bring that forth and so that my kids can know about their background, they can know more about their own blood,” Vanessa, who was accompanied on this trip by her mom Gina and sister Stella, said.

Meanwhile, Gina Guangco, Vanessa’s mom, said what it was like raising Vanessa and her sibling in the US.

“Raising two girls in America, I tried to infuse the Filipino culture. Kindness is No. 1 and not to forget who they are and be true to themselves because that’s the only way how we can be, you know, a good example to other people,” she said.

Asked in turn how her mom “shaped” her, Vanessa said, “I am who I am because of her. We are all products of our parents, especially our mother... they are the ones who bring us to this world.”

“But my mom has always been very, very, very supportive, very kind, very grounded and humble and I feel like that really has given me the outlook that I have today.”

Meanwhile, the High School Musical star who has her own production outfit said she was open to working in the Philippines and film a movie here.

“Yes, of course, I mean, it would be a wonderful excuse to be here. I’m trying to spend as much time as I can here now,” she said. When asked on the other hand if she’d be open to marry in the Philippines, she said, “I mean, if it was just me and my fiancé eloping yes, but we’re not so...” then laughingly begged off from talking further about her personal life.

“I don’t know, there’s so many things... that’s a personal conversation that we don’t need to talk about here, in front of everybody.”

Vanessa also gave some advice to aspiring artists who’d like to follow in her footsteps.

“I feel like the most important thing with the entertainment industry and the thing that I personally value the most is telling the stories. It doesn’t necessarily matter on what scale and to me, the reason I think why I am where I am is because it’s always been about the stories that I’m passionate about.

“If you’re trying to get famous, if that’s your goal, don’t do it with the entertainment industry. Go figure out something but not in film because it’s a really sacred thing. I think that’s really important to remember. It’s not about fame. It’s about telling stories that you’re passionate about telling stories that move people and that means you.”



Dr. Vicky Santiago's

Birthday celebrations with family & friends

“A simple celebration, a gathering of friends; here wishing you great happiness and a joy that never ends.”

A collage of several photographs showing a group of people gathered around a table, celebrating a birthday. There is a large cake with candles, and people are smiling and posing for the camera. The photos are arranged in a collage format with a colorful border.

Toronto Kapuso Lions Club March 2023 General Meeting. Thanks for the visit, 2nd VDG Candidate Lion Danny Galicia, Zone 58A Chair Redentor Andres and Riza Galicia.

ERASERHEADS MEDIA SALO-SALO

1. Tala producers Honeydeep Joneja, Rosary Escano, Gerald Aquintey and Yana Alvaro;

2. Domz Kylie emceed the salo-salo;

3. Tala entertainment and media pose for a group picture;

4. Joy D'aoust continues with the wrong lyrics as Tala producer Yana Alvaro sings an Eraserheads song;

5. Eraserheads poster;

6. John accompaniment.

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Manny Pacquiao dragged from retirement

Manny Pacquiao is set to return to the ring at 44 despite heading to the exhibition circuit following a 2021 retirement.

UK welterweight Conor Benn’s team made an offer to Pacquiao following interest from MP Promotions President Sean Gibbons.

Pacquiao’s right-hand man responded to a sounding out by Benn and his handler Eddie Hearn. It seems all parties are now on board for a Saudi Arabia collision. In the grand scheme of things, the event does make sense. However, it will make no impact whatsoever on the current 147-pound climate.

Benn cannot fight in the UK due to a UKAD suspension of two failed drug tests. At the same time, Pacquiao is simply going where the money is.

Before Benn, he was scratching around, facing Combat YouTubers, and getting linked to fighting influencers and old MMA stars.

Manny Pacquiao vs Conor Benn

After a few weeks of testing the waters with fans, Gibbons and Hearn believe it’s worth staging the Pay Per View in the Middle East.



If Benn wins, they will say he was meant to. Pacquiao is in his mid-forties and lost to Yordenis Ugas last time. If Pacquiao wins, they’ll say Benn wasn’t ready for the step up.

For the fans, it’s lose-lose, whichever way you look at it – especially if an investigation into Benn’s failed drug tests yields a lengthy ban. The British Boxing Board of Control hasn’t revealed its findings.

That’s despite the World Boxing Council stating they couldn’t prove Benn knowingly ingested the performance enhancing drugs found in his system on two separate occasions last year. Speaking to journalist Piers Morgan in the UK, Benn pleaded his innocence and stated his mental health had suffered. Benn added on potentially being banned from fighting at home in Britain: “My dad tore up his British boxing license on TV. “I don’t have to be licensed by the board. I don’t plan on fighting in Britain any time soon.” That leads perfectly into the Pacquiao fight, most likely in Abu Dhabi if a recent poster shared by Gibbons is anything to go by.

Will the UK fans feel as excited as Benn about facing an old legend? – Only time will tell.

Rodrigo Duterte to play himself in MAM

Who else can best portray Rodrigo Duterte than Rodrigo Duterte himself?

With that statement, Director Darryl Yap announced in a press conference yesterday that the former president has agreed to play himself in the third installment of Viva Films’ Marcos flicks, ‘Mabuhay Aloha Mabuhay.’ The upcoming film is expected to chronicle the Hawaii exile



of the Marcoses in 1986 to the election of Bongbong Marcos in 2022.

Duterte joined the rest of the cast of MaM at the press conference, including Cesar Montano as Ferdinand E. Marcos, Ruffa Gutierrez as Imelda Marcos, Aga Muhlach as Bongbong Marcos, among others.

Imee Marcos is also expected to play herself.

Rape cases vs Vhong Navarro dismissed by SC

MANILA, Philippines – The Supreme Court’s Third Division dismissed the rape and acts of lasciviousness charges filed against actor-host Vhong Navarro due to lack of probable cause.

The Division, in a 43-page ruling dated February 8 but made public Monday, granted the Petition for Review on Certiorari filed by Navarro’s legal team. “Accordingly, the Court DISMISSES the following Informations against Ferdinand ‘Vhong’ H. Navarro for lack of probable cause,” the ruling read. “The Decision dated July 21, 2022 and the Resolution dated September 20, 2022 of the Court of Appeals in CA-G.R. SP No. 166222 are reversed and set aside,” it added.

The said CA rulings reversed the Department of Justice resolutions that dismissed the charges



against Navarro. The appeals court then ordered the filing of rape and acts of lasciviousness against the actor. But the SC Division said that the appeals court “erred in finding that the DOJ committed grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction in dismissing the Third Complaint for rape and attempted rape against Navarro for lack of probable cause.” The high court stressed that inconsistencies in Cornejo’s allegations are not trivial, and the prosecutor had reasons to doubt her accusations.

Associate Justice Henri Jean Paul Inting penned the ruling, with concurrences from Associate Justices Alfredo Benjamin Caguioa (chairperson of the division), Samuel Gaerlan, Japar Dimaampao and Maria Filomena Singh.

PORK from page 1

ernment-subsidized low-cost stores—to slow down the rise in prices.

“We are analyzing [the pork price hike],” Estoperez said in Filipino. “Was the upward pressure on pork prices caused by the decline in poultry production? ... because the prices of pork and chicken usually decrease during Holy Week.”

Estoperez said the spike may have also been caused by small hog raisers, who comprise the bulk of the country’s pork producers.

“During the summer season, small players usually reduce their output,” he said, adding that the heat makes swine susceptible to illness.

A serious challenge

African swine fever (ASF) remains a serious challenge to the local swine industry.

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) shows there are active cases of the deadly animal disease in 11 regions, 21 provinces, 54 municipalities and 137 barangays as of March 27.

Affected regions are Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos Region, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern

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Estoperez assured that the government is exerting all efforts to contain ASF, which first broke out in 2019.

Historically, the consumption of fish and seafood products increase during the Lenten season as Catholics across the country fast and practice abstinence from meat products, especially on Good Friday.

But markets in Metro Manila were selling pork ham (kasim) from P290 to P350 per kilogram as of Friday, higher than P270 to P340 per kg last March 24, based on the DA’s price monitoring.

Yayo Aguila, love teams, being Belle Mariano’s look-alike



FROM LEFT, Yayo Aguila and Belle Mariano

“She’s a pretty girl, so why not?” said seasoned actress Yayo Aguila, who just laughed off comments by netizens that she could be the long-lost mom of teen star Belle Mariano.

“I’m actually a fan of DonBelle,” said Yayo of the on-screen partnership between Belle and Donny Pangilinan. “I’ve played mom to Belle before, in the series ‘He’s Into Her.’ Although I didn’t have a scene with her. My picture was just in the locket she was wearing.”

Yayo continued: “Even my kids noticed the resemblance. They would look at her Instagram photos, then show me those that remind them of me. I’m happy about it. Gandang bata! It makes me proud.”

During the media launch of her latest sitcom, “Team A: Happy Fam, Happy Life,” Yayo was asked to share her views on love teams in local show biz, in general, and about her being a part of one when she was younger.

“A lot of actors turn into celebrities because of love teams. They are there because the audience patronizes them. There are actors who have gone solo, but didn’t do very well compared to when they were in a team. We give credit to these on-screen partnerships,” she pointed out.

Business element

In reference to the issue of some artists admitting to being forced to do work that makes them feel unhappy or curtails their creative freedom, Yayo has this to say: “Show business is called as such because there’s also a business element to it. As an artist, you should also have a say in the career path you want. That’s why you have a manager or handler to help you voice out your opinions. You just have to be able to clearly state what you want and communicate this with them well.”

“When young talents ask me for advice, I tell them, ‘You first have to know what you want. If they make you do something you’re not comfortable doing, be sure to say so. Then maybe, you can all work around that,’” she said.

In “Team A,” Yayo works closely with the popular love team of Kim Molina and Jerald Napoles, collectively known as KimJe.

“I enjoy working and hanging out with KimJe. I’ve never heard them complain, even though they’re already very tired.”

Working with real-life partner

“I’ve gone through what they’re experiencing now—working with a real-life partner. This requires so much professionalism from both parties,” said

Yayo, who used to be married to actor William Martinez, with whom she has four children.

“KimJe is unique because they are also business partners. They are handling their partnership, in all aspects, pretty well,” Yayo said.

When asked of her love life at the moment, Yayo said: “I said I’m in a happy place. I also know that William has already found another person to be with.”

“For the longest time, I kept telling everyone that I didn’t want to remarry anymore. However, I’ve also reached a point in my life when I also long to share happy moments with somebody, to get pretty and go out on dates. Even my children, who are all adults now, would encourage me to go out but I’m torn because I love my work so much and I want to give it the attention it deserves.”

She continued: “I’m happy that I’m still being offered jobs at this point in my career. I’m so grateful, especially to Viva Entertainment, that I don’t want to turn down any project even though I already feel tired sometimes. For me, it’s not just the money anymore, it’s the trust given to me. There are other actors out there, but my bosses keep requesting for me. Who am I to say ‘no’ to them?”

“I kept telling everyone that I didn’t want to remarry anymore. However...”

Xian’s improved skating skills impress Ashley Ortega

Ashley Ortega is a cut out for her role in GMA Network’s ongoing prime time drama, “Hearts on Ice.” A professional figure skater before she heeded the call of the entertainment industry, her first lead role could not be more apt. However, it is a different story for her leading man Xian Lim.

Though a natural sports buff, the actor has never tried ice skating until he started preparing for his role.

In August 2022, Lim excitedly announced the start of the show. Later, he shared that he passed his Pre Alpha-Delta skating proficiency test. Before heeding the call of showbiz, Ashley Ortega was a professional figure skater. This impressive improvement got the approval of Ortega.



“The first time I saw him on the skating rink, he would really stumble but he has improved a lot since then—he can now glide, do crossovers and even lift me up when we have a routine together,” the proud co-star shared in a media conference.

“He learned how to skate for the show but he fell in love with the sport and it translated to his performance. I’m also proud of him for doing all of his scenes, he has no double in the show,” Ortega added.

“Hearts on Ice” follows the story of Ponggay (Ortega) who, despite her leg impairment, aspires to fulfill her mother’s broken dreams of becoming a figure skating champion.

PHILIPPINES

Vatican declares Antipolo Cathedral ‘International Shrine’

The title “Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage” was attributed to the image at the cathedral based on circumstances that occurred while it was sailing toward the archipelago.



The Vatican has declared the National Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage – popularly known as the Antipolo Cathedral – as an international shrine.

“It’s official. We are now elevated into an international shrine,” an article posted on the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) website, quoting the Antipolo Cathedral, stated.

The CBCP said the decree was sent to the Antipolo Cathedral by the Holy See and will take effect on March 25, making it the country’s first international shrine.

Records show that the Antipolo Cathedral is the third international shrine in Asia and the 11th worldwide.

The CBCP said Antipolo Bishop Francisco de Leon disclosed in June 2022 that the Vatican has approved their petition to grant the international shrine privilege to the cathedral.

It said March 25 coincides with the day when the image of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage departed Acapulco on board a galleon 397 years ago.

The cathedral said the galleon was battered by storms and almost caught fire during the three-month voyage, but it still arrived safely on Philippine shores on June 18, 1626.

The title “Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage” was attributed to the image based on circumstances that occurred while it was sailing toward the archipelago.

Marcos guarantees continuity of past administrations’ projects under his term

MANILA – President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Saturday said his government would continue unfinished projects of past administrations under Philippines’ ongoing infrastructure push.



The government recently approved 194 “high-impact” infrastructure projects worth P9 trillion, around 70 of which were proposed under the past administration, Marcos Jr. said on his YouTube vlog.

“Hindi tama yun... Hindi iyan ang pag-iisip na magdadala sa atin sa isang bagong Pilipinas,” he said. “Kung masusi naman ang pag-aaral at talagang may pakinabang ay talagang dapat ituloy,” he added.

The administration wants to improve the Philippines’ digital connectivity, flood control, irrigation, water supply, health, power and energy infrastructure, Marcos Jr said.

“Ang moderno at mas matibay na imprastraktura ay maghikikayat ng mas maraming investors sa ating bansa,” he said.

“Ito pong mga negosyanteng ito ay magdadala ng daang-libong trabaho sa atin at bilyong-bilyong kita sa ating bansa,” he said.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has also “adjusted the guidelines” for joint venture programs to make the Philippines “more attractive” to investors, he said.

“Ang imprastraktura ay kaunlaran. Dala dala ang mga benepisyo na magpapaganda hindi lang ng ekonomiya kung hindi ang antas ng kalidad ng pamumuhay ng bawat Pilipino.”

The Philippines’ post-pandemic infrastructure program has left the country with a P13-trillion sovereign debt by the end of 2022, the Bureau of Treasury said earlier this year.

CONSTITUTION from p1

Philippines said enacted laws such as the Public Service Act, Retail Trade Liberalization Act, the Foreign Investment Act, the passage of the Rice Trade Liberalization Act, and regulations like the Department of Energy (DoE) circular allowing 100 percent foreign ownership in the renewable energy sector “can accelerate recovery and job growth at a time when the Philippines and the world face serious economic headwinds.”

The groups said the government’s efforts to amend the Charter’s economic provisions could be derailed by “political

debate.”

“Investors take a wait-and-see attitude for an extended period of time and therefore derail the impact of the reforms,” they said.

The groups said the government must work on passing at least two more tax reform bills and other measures such as the Ease of Paying Taxes bill, instead of prioritizing Charter change.

The money spent to amend the Constitution is “better spent on pro-people programs,” they said.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) estimates that a constitutional convention would cost

between P14 billion and P28 billion.

In the bill proposing such an assembly, P10,000 per day is earmarked for the 300 elected and appointed delegates.

“We believe these funds can be better used on agriculture to address the high inflation, transportation to enable Filipinos to get to work and home in much less time, and needed social services like health, education, and social security,” the organizations noted. The House of Representatives has adopted House Bill 7352, which aims to amend the Constitution through a constituent convention or con-con, in

which the public elects delegates who will draft the new charter.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said he is willing to discuss options for amending the Constitution through a constituent assembly or con-ass, a process of Charter change in which only Congress is empowered to amend the Constitution.

“If the Senate wants a different mode, that is their discretion. The House leadership, however, is willing to open discussions with the Senate on their preferred mode of amending the Constitution if that will lead to an agreement between the two chambers,” Romualdez said.

“We are open to considering any proposal of the Senate and will submit such a proposal to members of the House. This was what I related to [Leyte Fourth District] Rep. Richard Gomez when he informed me that senators are amenable to economic amendments but through con-ass,” he said.

Gomez earlier said Romualdez has agreed to back the Senate’s initiative for a constituent assembly.

Romualdez commended Gomez and Sen. Robinhood Padilla for forging an agreement between the House and Senate on charter amendments.

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Iza Calzado shares journey as a first-time mother: ‘Most challenging yet fulfilling journey’

Kapamilya actress Iza Calzado gave an update on Instagram last Thursday, March 30, about the experiences she’s been having as a first-time mother to her newborn, Deia Amihan.

Iza opened up about the emotional rollercoaster she had days after she gave birth to her baby. It has been two months since the actress gave birth to Deia Amihan.

“This photo was taken a few days after giving birth, right after I cried so hard from a few ‘failures’ I felt I had as a new mother mixed with

the deep love I was feeling for my child, the kind I have never felt for anyone before,” she wrote.

The celebrity mom admitted how the first days of her postpartum weren’t easy but added how it got better for her over time.

“It’s quite a punch, the first few days, weeks post birth. Hindi siya madali. I am still recovering from it all but every day gets better and



better. I am on my ninth week postpartum and we are a few weeks away from completing the fourth

trimester. This is, by far, the most challenging yet fulfilling journey I have been on and I know it is only the beginning,” she added.

Iza promised her followers that she’ll be giving more updates “when

I find myself navigating this transition in the best way I know how — with faith, compassion, gratitude and love knowing I am divinely guided and supported,”

the time is right” for everything.

“At this point, I find myself navigating this transition in the best way I know how — with faith, compassion, gratitude and love knowing I am divinely guided and supported,” she continued.

“Grabe, what a ride! I am becoming, I am evolving into — wait.. I am a Mother! An imperfectly perfect Mother to my precious child, Deia. Biruin mo yun? A gift indeed. Thank You, Lord,” she ended.

Iza announced the birth of her daughter last March 26—exactly two months after she gave birth. She took a short break on social media to prepare for Deia Amihan’s arrival.



JM De Guzman and Cindy Miranda recall crazy moments in love

During the media conference for their upcoming movie, “Adik Sa’Yo” produced by Viva Films held at Boteyju Japanese Restaurant in Quezon City last April 1, JM and Cindy got a bit emotional when they recalled the days of being madly in love.

It happened a long time ago but JM De Guzman and Cindy Miranda admitted that they were once crazy when it came to love.

“Literal hinabol ko talaga yung lalaki because of love. Medyo bata pa po ako nun. Hinabol ko po. Iiwanan ka eh. Hinabol ko po,” said Cindy, who admitted she had been rejected for love several times.: “Ang saklap. Pagdating talaga sa pag-ibig walang pinipili. Maganda ka, gwapo ka, ano ka man, palagi kang masasaktan.”

“Nabubuhay naman ako sa tunay na realidad. Maraming mas maganda sa’yo. Maraming mas talented sa’yo. Maraming mas may ‘k’ sa’yo. Palagi

kang papalitan at papalitan. Pero palagi kong sinasabi sa sarili ko kahit na iwanan ako ng iwanan, stick lang ako sa sarili ko,” said the 32-year-old former beauty queen.

Asked about her reaction when she finally saw the new girl of her boyfriend, Cindy said: “Siyempre masakit. Masakit po. Hahanapin mo kasi yung mali sa sarili mo kahit na ayaw mo pa rin ikumpara yung sarili mo sa ibang tao. Ano yung meron siya na wala ako? But I realized. Hindi ako ang may fault. Feeling ko God’s plan ito. After that you will meet someone better. Someone who can make you happier and make you laugh. So later, sasabihin ko kaya naman pala kami naghiwalay kasi may darating na mas mabuti. I’m not heartbroken. It’s just that pagbinabalikan ko po, it’s just painful pero I’m glad na wala na ako sa relasyon na yun. I’m happy kung nasaan man



ako ngayon.”

JM also said that he also fell in love madly and deeply. “Nabuwang ako (pagdating sa pag-ibig). Nabuwang na rin ako sa pag-ibig.”

When asked about the girl, JM answered: “Secret.”

JM continued: “Bata pa po ako nun. Nasa level ka na ng ito na ang gusto kong pakasalan. Gusto kong makasama habang buhay. Eto na yung gusto kong mahalin araw-araw tapos biglang mawawala. Masakit sobra. Tapos hindi mo na alam saan

“Literal hinabol ko talaga yung lalaki because of love. Medyo bata pa po ako nun. Hinabol ko po. Iiwanan ka eh. Hinabol ko po,”

mo ibabaling yung pagmamahal na dapat para sa kanya. So sobrang sakit, nag-self destruct ako. Parang yun ang naging tendencies ko bilang isang lover. I tend to hurt myself, to destroy myself, to destroy my career. Lahat ng mahawakan ng kamay ko sisirain ko. Hindi ako nananakit ng ibang tao sarili ko lang.”

The award-winning actor realized the consequences of being crazy in love.

“Hindi na ako nabibigyan ng work, na-rehabilitate ako, natanggal lahat ng privileges ko like yung mga simpleng cell phone or ilang years wala kaming TV. Doon ko narealize na mga simpleng bagay na kailangan ko ma-appreciate. What more yung mga blessings na sinayang ko raw,” JM also said.

JM, 34, admitted he had regrets. “Pero hangga’t nabibigyan ako ng pagkakataon bumabawi naman ako.”

Describing his life these days, JM said: “Patuloy pa rin ang buhay. Marami pa ring challenges. Hindi nag-stop yung mga challenges na dumarating. I just have to face it every day. I just need to be wiser and stronger.”

'Ako acting coach niya': What Empoy Marquez learned from Dolly de Leon

Director Sigrid Andrea Bernardo expressed confidence that her new film "Walang KaParis" starring her "Kita Kita" stars Alessandra de Rossi and Empoy Marquez will be a success as she sought help from award-winning actress Dolly de Leon.

Sigrid shared that Alessandra and Empoy — or "AlEmpoy" — had workshoped under De Leon. Alessandra later clarified that Dolly was Empoy's acting coach. "Ako naman ang acting coach ni Ms. Dolly, kaya siya naging nominee. Palitan lang," Empoy joked, referencing her international recognitions for her

scene-stealing performance in the 2022 Palme d'Or winner "Triangle of Sadness." The movie was also up for three Academy Awards including Best Picture, and Dolly attended the ceremony wearing a black suit by Lorenzo Serafini, red custom Vex Latex gloves, and red heels from Manolo Blahnik.

Sigrid continued, "Gusto ko i-challenge 'yung capacity nila umarte. Kilala ko naman si Alessandra and capacity niya, but always drama so tignan ko kung kaya... sa personal sobrang komedyante siya pero sa screen [can] she pull it off?

Ako naman ang acting coach ni Ms. Dolly, kaya siya naging nominee

And I'm very happy na na-pull off. Si Empoy sa drama naman." Alessandra asked Sigrid if Empoy was able to pull it off as well, and the director joked that he did after some 10,000 takes. Not to be outdone, Empoy also joked that Dolly even slept beside them throughout the process. The actress then shared a story involving Empoy and Dolly where the latter was holding Empoy's water and cellphone which had Dolly saying, "Ano ba ako dito, yaya mo o acting coach? Di ka naman nakikinig saakin!" Empoy then responded in true come-



Composite image of Alessandra de Rossi, Sigrid Andrea Bernardo, and Empoy Marquez, and Dolly de Leon at the 2023 BAFTAs

dic fashion with a knock-knock joke using her name, which had Dolly laughing again. Prime Video's "Walang KaParis" follows a Paris-based Filipino artist whose many past lovers do not compare to the mysterious muse of his paintings, until one day a woman named Marie appears and claims to be the subject of his work.

Introducing the new Philippine Ambassador to Canada, Her Excellency Maria Andrelita Austria

The former Consul General to Vancouver, British Columbia, Her Excellency Maria Andrelita Austria, is the new Philippine Ambassador to Canada. Austria was designated by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on October 19, 2022. and was officially nominated by the Philippine government in December 2022. The Federal government of Canada accepted her credentials on February 21, 2023, as the Philippine envoy in Ottawa. She took over the post from former Philippine Ambassador Rodolfo D. Robles. The newly confirmed Philippine representative is a career foreign service officer. Ambassador Austria has decades of experience in foreign diplomacy for more than 30 years. From 2018 to 2022, she served as the Consul General of Vancouver, B.C., and worked from June 2014

until 2018 as Assistant Secretary of the American Affairs Office at the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs. She was also posted from 2009 to 2014 at the Philippine embassy in Washington DC, as a political officer and then as deputy chief of mission, and from 1996 to 2002, was assigned to the Philippine consulate general in San Francisco, California, USA In 2016, Austria received the "Presidential Medal of Merit" from President Benigno S. Aquino 3rd. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs also bestowed the "Gawad Mabini Award" with the rank of "Dakilang Kasugo". During President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's administration, Austria was conferred the "Presidential Order of Lakandula"



with the rank of Officer for her significant contributions to the Philippine Foreign Service. Ambassador M. A. Austria graduated Cum Laude from Maryknoll College in 1986 with a Bachelor's degree in International Studies and also obtained from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, the Netherlands, a post-graduate diploma in International Relations and Development. Filipino- Canadian community leaders in B.C. lauded Austria's recent ambassadorial appointment. Mable Elmore, a Filipino-Canadian Member of the Legislative Assembly of B.C. said, she "believes Filipinos in Canada will be well-served by Austria's appointment". She's been a very selfless advocate in terms of rec-

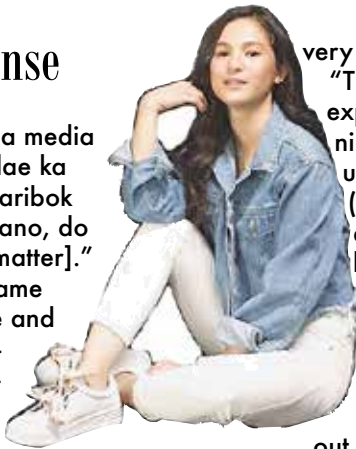
ognizing the credentials of immigrants and they were really key, instrumental in terms of our government making moves to improve the recognition of internationally educated nurses," MLA Elmore said. Her new post is expected to bring a profound understanding of the bilateral relations between the Philippines and Canada, being "well-versed in the issues affecting the 2 countries". In Ontario, where there is a large population of overseas Filipino workers, temporary skilled workers, international students, and newly-arrived immigrants, Fil-Can community leaders hope the new Philippine Ambassador will continue to represent the voices and interests of Filipinos in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT).

Barbie Imperial calls netizen 'stupid'; Bicolano fans come to her defense

Barbie Imperial drew mixed reactions after she called a netizen "patal," a Bicol word for "stupid," for supposedly not reading entirely an announcement from the actress. Imperial said this to one Mark Rainier Cavite after the actress invited fans to an opening event of a fast-food restaurant in Camalig, Albay. "Nem ilingan kita saaga sa Bigg's Camalig, 1 p.m. ah (Let's meet tomorrow at Bigg's Camalig at 1 p.m.)," she wrote on her Facebook page a day before the event. "Unung oras? (At what time?),"

Cavite asked in the comments section, to which Imperial responded, "Dae kana magduman ta patal ka basa basa man tabi (Don't go [to the event] because you are stupid. Read [the announcement].)" While most netizens laughed off the exchange between Imperial and Cavite, some seemingly did not find it funny. Imperial then seemingly poked fun at Cavite's comment as she wrote in a separate post, "UPDATE: Dae nag abot si Mark sa Bigg's." (UPDATE: Mark was not able to attend the [event] at Bigg's.) The actress also shared a post about

her and Cavite from a media site and said, "Pag dae ka bicolano dae na pararibok (If you're not a Bicolano, do not be loud [on the matter].)" Bicolano fans then came to Imperial's defense and pointed out that "patal" is just an expression for them. "No mana normal sana an sa Bicol. The design is very kapay," one Jennifer Araojo said. (What even is this? This (kind of exchange) is normal in Bicol. The design is



very stupid.) "The design is very patal. It's an expression to us. Ginibo naman nindong big deal," Facebook user Yhen Legaspi II commented. (The design is very stupid. It's an expression to us. You made a big deal out of it again.) "Patal patalon ka ('You are stupid') is the new love language here in Bicol," one Julia Beatrice S. Basco said. Imperial reportedly reached out to Cavite and apologized after the latter received bashing on social media. Cavite showed screenshots of his conversation with the actress, but the post has since expired.

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People ...are talking about

Klea Pineda

Coming out about one's sexuality is difficult in a conservative country like the Philippines, even though society is slowly progressing towards inclusivity and gender equality. Still, Kapuso actress Klea mustered the courage to tell the world about the person she loves. She's finally speaking her truth and doing things that make her happy. Although Pride Month is



still some weeks away, love wins every time.

LA Tenorio

After showing his skills on the hardcourt for decades under the Ginebra San Miguel banner, Tenorio, who also goes by the moniker "Tinyente," recently shared his battle with stage three colon cancer. There's no denying that Tenorio made significant contributions to the local basketball scene. But at this point, his fans are more willing to see him recover than push himself in the games.

People...are not talking about

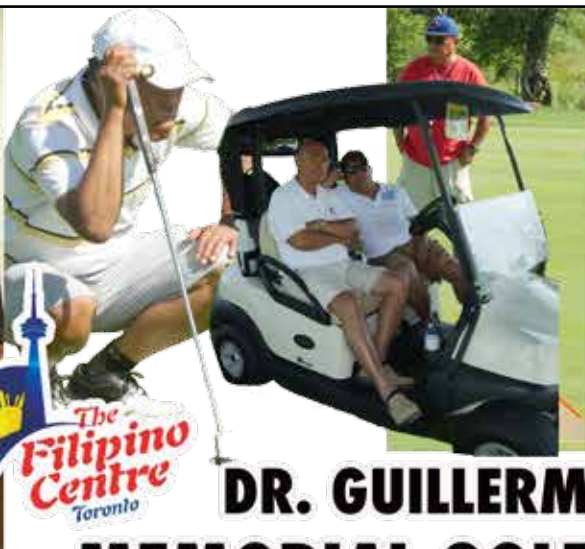
Issa Pressman

They say that "time is the ultimate truth teller," and former JaDine (the love team for James Reid and Nadine Lustre) fans are not amused with how she and James soft-launched their relationship on Instagram. Former interviews and cryptic posts from Nadine and her circle of friends are resurfacing, greasing the wheels of the rumor mill. Maybe Issa and James did get together without hurting Nadine, or perhaps they didn't. At least Nadine is happy and unbothered. Just

"kween" things.

Gerald Anderson

In his interview with Korina Sanchez in Net25's Korina Interviews, the actor said that his sweetheart Julia Barretto is the girl for him. If we looked back at Gerald's past, we'd see a string of relationships that many of us thought at least one of them would be his last. But alas, the search went on for the actor. Then again, perhaps there's truth in his words that Julia will finally make him settle down.



DR. GUILLERMO DE VILLA MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT July 23, 2023

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PRESS RELEASE # 1:

On June 16, all roads lead to the largest Filipino concert ever in Canada! What is dubbed to be the final concert of ERASERHEADS, these musical icons will also be the first ever Filipino performers at the First Ontario Centre in Hamilton, ON. It joins a stellar list of international acts like Elton John, Paul McCartney, Maroon 5, BTS, Backstreet Boys, Selena Gomez, among many others.

Coming from the massively successful December final reunion concert in Manila, “Huling El Bimbo” the final reunion concert will tour North America. In Ontario, Canada, the highly anticipated rock concert will perform before a crowd of over 10,000 fans.

Perfectly timed during Philippine Independence Week and Filipino Heritage Month in Canada, fans from as far as the Maritimes and Quebec have committed to travel in bus loads, eager that they do not miss out on this one final opportunity to watch their most beloved band perform together.

Eraserheads is considered the most

iconic, influential, and successful alternative rock bands in the history of Filipino music. Frequently dubbed as the “Beatles of the Philippines”, their career spanned more than twenty years, with multiple platinum-awarded albums and quintessential songs under their belt. Formed in 1989 while students at the University of the Philippines, Raimund Marasigan, Ely Buendia, Buddy Zabala, and Marcus Adoro, collectively built a very colourful history, from disbandment and controversies to reunions and new songs. This is one epic Filipino rock party that Filipinos cutting through generations in Eastern Canada won’t want to miss.

Eraserheads Huling El Bimbo concert in Eastern Canada is produced by TALA Entertainment.

ABOUT TALA ENTERTAINMENT: Tala Entertainment is a talent and events management company specializing in creating experiential live music, concerts, and events that cater to different genres and customer demographic. Formed in 2019, TALA is committed to providing exceptional and unique live events serving not just Ontario but across provinces of Canada.

Sobrang tibay ng relasyon: KimXi unbothered sa mga intriga

Sa kabila ng mga pang-iintriga ng ilan fans sa relasyon nina Xian Lim at Kim Chiu, minsan pang ipinakita ng dalawa na unbothered at unaffected sila sa mga taong pilot na gumagawa ng issue sa maganda nilang relasyon. Sunod-sunod na pictures ang ipinost ni Xian sa pag-pu-food trip nila.

At sa post ni Xian, nagtatanong na agad si Kim ng, “San po yung next date natin???” In fairness, kilig na kilig naman ang mga fan nila. At may nagsabi na nga na sa first day of the month daw ng birthday ni Kim, may paandar na agad si Xian. Ibang klaseng boyfriend din si Xian!



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Nadine Lustre on dealing with jealousy in relationships: 'You have to fully trust your partner'

Even though Nadine Lustre is currently in a happy relationship with her boyfriend, Filipino-French businessman Christophe Bariou, she didn’t hesitate to share her thoughts about relationships especially when it comes to dealing with jealousy.

Lustre admitted that being a jealous partner is a sign of “insecurity,” when she was asked to give love advice to a “selosa,” or someone who easily gets jealous.

“Sobrang selosa ko po (I’m the type of person who gets extremely jealous). How do I stop myself from being jealous all the time?” a lifestyle magazine reader asked the actress.

“I learned that being jealous could also come from insecurity. If you’re not really secure about yourself, definitely, when you’re selosa, if your boyfriend is hanging out with another girl [na] friend lang naman talaga (who is just a friend). Sometimes, you tend to get a bit worried and insecure. It has a lot to do with your confidence talaga. And also trust,” she answered.

Nadine noted that while trust is crucial in keeping a relationship alive, it is something that is built with communication and a “kind of connection” with a partner.

“You have to fully trust your partner and know that he’s not gonna do anything wrong. And the thing is with trust, you have to build it. It’s not overnight. Like you really have to build it, you have to communicate,

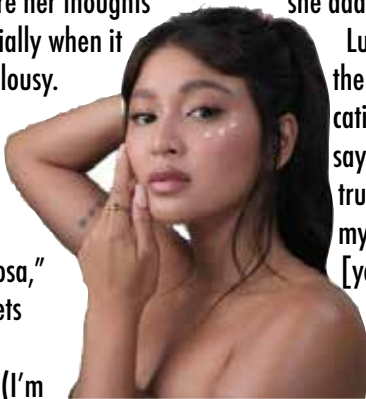
you have to have this kind of connection, and it’s not easy. But then, a relationship is never going to be easy. Who says it’s easy?” she added.

Lustre also talked about finding the need to maintain communication with a partner at all times, saying that it helps in building trust in a relationship. “I guess my advice is to really work on [your] trust in each other. And make sure that you’re open to one another if there’s something that’s making you uncomfortable, tell him right away,” she said.

“Don’t wait, [almost to the point of] bottling up and exploding inside of you. Just always, always talk to him. If there’s anything you’re uncomfortable with or if there’s anything that’s bothering you, communicate. And that’s pretty much how you build trust,” she further added.

While the actress-singer did not reveal when she started dating Bariou, she shared a photo of them together on Instagram in January 2022.

Lustre was previously in a relationship with musician James Reid, who has been making headlines after seemingly confirming his romance with British-Filipino model Issa Pressman. To recall, the latter was accused of being the third party in the ex-partners’ breakup back in 2020, although the actors clarified that their split was a mutual decision.



“Whoever is happy will
make others happy too.”
Anne Frank

Two Concerts, Same Night, Sold out

Before the pandemic, there was the belief that if two concerts are shown on the same date and time, neither one will sell out or one will flop. Well, that belief has now been debunked.

Moira and Remiscin were two concerts that went head to head and both of them sold out. Everyone is happy.

Remiscin featured Joey Generoso and Kinky Vidal. Joey is popularly known as Joey G. He is best-known for the monster hits “Forevermore”, “So Many Questions” and “Hold On”. Jinky Vidal was a founding member and vocalist of the now famed Filipino band Freestyle.

Moira is a Filipino singer who rose to fame via The Voice of the Philippines.

Some say that the crowd of Moira is younger and the crowd at Remiscin featuring Jinky Vidal and Joey Generoso are older.

I’m not sure about that. Based on the crowd that I saw on Remiscin and at Moira through facebook, they look like the same age bracket.

Painting & Health

There is a seniors painting session every Wednesday at the Filipino Centre Toronto. More than learning how to paint, it is the socializing factor that is important.

Why Is Socializing Important?

Today, social isolation remains one of the leading causes of depression in seniors.

Multiple studies have linked socialization with improved cognitive function, including a recent one that found that seniors who socialized retained their episodic memory better than groups that didn’t. This improved cognitive function can actually aid in the slowing of memory loss, giving you a sharper mind and more positive experiences.

Socializing like connecting with friends and family may also boost

your brain health and lower your risk of dementia. This is thought to be made possible through an increase in connections between brain cells, which helps the brain become more resilient in the face of Alzheimer’s. The counter-effect to social isolation also keeps depression at bay, which has been thought to increase dementia. Seniors who are more social are typically more

Consul General Orontes Castro dances at the Bicol dinner last year.

active. Increased physical activity not only bolsters brain health, but it helps keep you moving, which has been linked to living a longer

life.

Older adults with active social lives can also prevent a number of physical ailments from negatively impacting their overall health. Among the greatest benefits of physical activity are the following:

- Lower blood pressure
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular problems
- Reduced risk of osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis
- Potentially reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s
- Potentially reduce the risk of mental health issues

More importantly, seniors who remain physically and intellectually active in social settings can also help fight off depression through interaction.

Diabetes Webinar

Righ now, there is a diabetes webinar session after the painting class. It happens every other Wednesday. Two sessions have already been done.

Farewell Congen

Consul General Orontes Castro’s time in Toronto has come to an end. A lot of people in the community will miss him, specially his dancing prsence in Filipino gatherings.

FPJ

I want to have my own take on it,” said “FPJ’s Batang Quiapo” lead actress Lovi



Poe of a character once played by Maricel Soriano in the movie version that also featured her late father, Fernando Poe Jr. (FPJ).

“I’ve already watched the movie before, but as part of my preparation for the series, I made sure to see it again. However, I don’t want to find myself copying Ms Maricel. Also, my character here is totally different from hers in terms of their respective life journeys,” she told reporters recently.

“When it comes to training, I’m currently into one, but I’m not allowed to elaborate on it yet. I’ve been doing this unique preparation even before we started taping for the show,” she added.

‘Bargas’

Asked to describe her character Mocha “Mokang” Dimaculangan, Lovi said: “The term we always use when talking about her is ‘bargas,’ especially in the way she speaks and moves. This comes naturally to me, too. Not many people know this, but I act according to how I’m dressed.”

When it was time to describe Coco Martin as a coactor,

series not among reasons behind Lovi’s transfer to ABS-CBN

producer and director, Lovi had this to say: “He is such a caring person. He treats everyone on the set equally—that’s the one thing that I will never forget about him ever.”

‘Kulitan’ scenes

Lovi then compared her career path to Coco’s. “He said he started with doing indies. Those were the kind of movies I did when I was starting as an actress, too. I’m excited to know what we’ll do

together for the show in the coming days, because, so far, we only got to tape our ‘kulitan’ scenes. I can’t wait to level up in my acting for the program because I know our characters still have a lot of exciting adventures together,” she declared.

Of their scenes together, Lovi said the most memorable for her, so far, was the one they did inside a jeepney. Tanggol volunteers to bring Mokang to school. They hail a jeepney, but belatedly realize that there’s only one vacant seat. Tanggol tricks Mokang into sitting on his lap the entire ride.

“The scene came out cute, natural and funny. I don’t always get to play a character like this, and just as Coco said in an interview, we promise to offer a different Lovi through this series,” the actress pointed out.

Favorite movie

Lovi admitted to liking Coco’s unique way of directing the show—actors are not given any scripts and are encouraged to improvise. “I’m also not a fan of following the script completely. Of course, there are some directors who want

you to stick to the lines completely, I respect them,” she said. “I prefer to show emotions that come from the heart.”

Lovi added that one of her favorite movies of her dad’s was actually “Batang Quiapo,” and so she was grateful to be part of its TV adaptation. She also pointed out that the project was never part of the contract

negotiation for her transfer to ABS-CBN.

“We didn’t talk about me doing any FPJ series or film. However, it was my dream to be able to work with Coco. I admit to asking for Coco,” she said. “Not only do I get to work with him in ‘Batang Quiapo,’ but also with a wonderful cast. There’s nothing more I can ask for.”

Candid SPOOF

(Pop-ups are not supposed to be taken seriously - EDITOR)



Outgoing Consul General Orontes castro receives a bottle of wine from Filipino Centre Toronto’s Wendy Arena at the despedida held at FV Foods.

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SCENES

FROM the Sociallist

Martha Joy, Maria Panaligan and Alyssa Grace performed at the Reminisce concert.

Reminisce concert headliners Joey Generoso and Jinky Vidal entertained the capacity crowd at Toronto Pavilion.

Carlos Unas asks a question at the diabetes webinar at The Filipino Centre.

Diabetes webinar at The Filipino Centre after Wednesday painting class

Nestor Arellano presents a letter to Congen Orontes Castro on behalf of MP Dalma Zahid.

Dashlee Go, Perly Ellarde, Arielle Perez, Sarong sisters and Shane Aludud pose with stars Zephania, Moira and TJ Monterde.

Lets Dance Live & Enjoy Life dance group presents a bottle of wine to Congen Orontes Castro.

Lets Dance Live & Enjoy Life dance group pose with Congen Orontes Castro.

Yassi surprised over Issa and James' relationship, but asserts all is well with Nadine

Yassi Pressman confessed she was also taken aback after her sister Issa and James Reid confirmed their relationship, but the actress stressed that everything was settled "in private" with their friend and fellow actress Nadine Lustre before it was made public.

Yassi addressed the matter, starting off with a clarification that she and Lustre are "cool" with each other, during the press conference of Yassi's TV series "Kurdapya" on Thursday, March 23.

"Para tapos na po, isang beses ko lang 'tong sasabihin—wala pong problem. Kami po ni Nadine, OK po kami. OK din po 'yung buong pamilya namin," she said. "At syempre po, bago po na-public ang lahat, lahat po ay naasikaso in private."

(So we can be done with it already, I'll only say this once—there is no problem. Nadine and I are OK, as well as our whole family. And of course before everything



Yassi Pressman, James Reid, Issa Pressman and Nadine Lustre

went public, it was settled in private.)

"Tsaka ilang taon na rin po," she continued, apparently referring to Lustre and Reid's breakup in 2019.

"Kaya ayon, sana everybody—let everyone be happy." (And it has already been years. So I hope everybody—let everyone be happy.)

Yassi further revealed that she and Lustre have

already talked to each other after Issa and Reid's relationship confirmation, with Yassi saying how she experiences anxiety over the public's reaction to it. Yassi said Lustre felt sorry for her and wished that she would feel better.

Yassi then noted that all is well between her and James, although she revealed that his relationship with her sister also came as a surprise to the actress.

"Nagulat lang din po ako syempre. Sabay-sabay po tayo," she disclosed. "Pero nung sinabi po sa akin 'yon recently, hinayaan ko na lang din po na magdesisyon 'yung mga tao because they're old enough naman to make their own decisions na rin po."

(Of course, I was shocked just like everyone else. But when I was told about it recently, I just let the people [involved] decide because they're already old enough to make their own decisions.)

"Tsaka lahat po ng tao may choice, at kung wala naman pong ibang taong tinatapakan at everybody's not doing anything wrong naman, feeling ko wala naman pong problema," she concluded.

(Also, everyone has a choice. As long as they are not stepping on someone and everybody's not doing anything wrong, then I feel like there's no problem with it.)

Reid and Issa earlier made their relationship public by showing themselves holding hands. This led netizens to bring up the 2020 allegations that Issa was the third party in Reid and Lustre's split. Reid immediately dismissed these accusations and stressed that they were just rumors.

Meanwhile, Lustre and Reid broke up in November 2019, but the former couple only confirmed it to the public in January 2020.

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Kim Molina, Jerald Napoles hindi makapaniwalang inalok ng comedy series: Sure po ba kayo?

"SURE po ba kayo?" ito raw ang naging reaksiyon ng real life couple na si Kim Molina at Jerald Napoles nang i-alok sa kanila ang Fun-seryeng "Team A" mula sa direksyon ni Mervyn Brondial.

Ito ang kuwento ng KimJe sa ginanap na mediacon ng "Team A" nitong Huwebes ng tanghali sa TV5.

Sabi pa ni Kim, "joke po ba, he, he, he, he."

"Oo, eh. Siyempre nagulat kami kasi among other celebrities also that they can cast ay napili po kami ng show na ito, so, initially we are very excited kasi it's a three project din for both of us. Kasi good vibes at ito ang kinalakihan ko kahit walang pang-sine may mapapanood kang John en Marsha," opinyon ni Jerald.

Nakuwento rin ni Kim na anuman ang i-post nila sa social media o i-vlog nila ay nakikita naman ng publiko at nasubukan din nilang mag-produce ng mini show noong kasagsagan ng pandemya kaya sakto itong offer sa kanilang fun serye dahil ito talaga ang gusto nila kaya grateful sila.

Nagkuwento si Kim ng sample ng eksenang umiiyak na siya sa katatawa dahil kina Anjo at Jerald na talagang kinailangang mag-cut pa si direk Mervyn pero hindi pa rin natapos sa katatawa ang komedya.

Sinigurado ng buong cast na sina Kim, Jerald, Anjo Yllana at Yayo Aguila na sa bawa't episode ng "Team A" ay tiyak na good

vibes ang hatid nito sa manonood simula sa Marso 18, tuwing Sabado, 9:30 pm sa TV5 at catch-up episodes sa darating na Marso 19, tuwing Linggo, 9:00 pm sa Sari Sari Channel Cignal Channel 3 produced ng Viva Entertainment, Sari Sari Channel at TV5.

At dahil fun serye ang "Team A" ay natanong ang mag-dyowa kung ano ang 'happy life' para sa kanila.

Unang sumagot si Jerald, "happy life para sa akin ay hindi puwedeng i-generalize kasi there's an individual wants and needs ng tao. Para sa akin as long as you are aware of that a little thing make you happy as much as big blessings can make you happy, both sides magkakaroon ka ng balance sa perspective mo at sa buhay then you'll be chill and happy for the rest of your life."

Sabi naman ni Kim, "I do believe for me being happy is a decision (natawa). Seriously, if you want to be happy, you should be contented of whatever you have because again, if you decided to be happy it will follow. It's law of attraction. Kung kahit maliliit na bagay lang ang magbibigay sa iyo ng kaligayahan, iyong mga susunod na bagay na darating sa buhay mo ay magiging masaya ka na rin para do'n dahil nakuha mo 'yun."

"Kasi if you're just going to look the negativity of every small detail na nahirapan ka sa araw na ito, may nangyayari sa buhay mo



ay lagi mong iisipin ang bagay na iyon hindi mon a pagtutunan ng pansin ang kaligayahan na kahit kaunti lang ay nagkaroon ka sa araw na iyon ay tuluy-tuloy na, so being happy is a decision."

Sumagot din si Yayo bilang nanay ni Kim sa fun-serye.

"Same rin sa sinabi ng mga anak ko (KimJe). Ang happiness is nasa sa'yo 'yun kung paano mo ia-accept sa buhay ang mga bagay at kung paano mo tatanggapin ng buo at kung paano mo gagamitin in a positive way. Kasi maraming bagay dumarating sa buhay natin, so, nandoon kung paano ka didiskarte pero if you have that positive outlook sa buhay mo, walang kahit anong dadating sa iyo na mahihirapan ka."

Baka Bet Mo: Kim Molina, Jerald Napoles ayaw pang magpakasal: Madaling magplano, mahirap panindigan

"Like ako sa edad kong ito masasabi ko happy ako, lahat ng idinadasal ibinibigay sa akin ni Lord, kung mayroon man siyang

hindi ibinibigay naiintindihan koi yon kaya happy ako. Saka kung anuman mayroon ako sa araw-araw ipagpasalamat natin at magiging happy ka. Ang happiness ay nasa sa'yo iyon."

Say naman ni Anjo, "At dahil old school ako, gusto kong i-quote 'yung Beatles, 'All You Need is Love.' Kasi di baa ng opposite ng happiness is sad. So, kung sad ka, all you need is love kasi love conquers all."

At si direk Mervyn, "ako po I agree with them. Parang is living the day para 'wag ka masyado sa future, 'yung moment lang and be yourself and appreciate 'yung mga bagay na nangyari sa iyo instead of worrying about materials things and dictated by the community dapat sa iyo manggaling and spread the good happiness and mayroon siyang happiness kaya happy kayong dalawa and spread what you have."

Saw along taong relasyon nina Kim at Jerald at kahit magkasama na sila sa iisang bubong ay wala pa silang planong magpakasal kahit napag-uusapan na nila pero open sila na magkaroon ng anak.

"Puwede. Hindi na namin ide-deny 'yan. Ang tatanda na namin, e," sabi ng aktor.

Sundot ni Kim, "ang tatanda na namin. Gusto ko na nga. Charing! Hahaha!"

Anyway, siguradong mapapahalhak ng Team A ang mga view-

ers lalo na't magkakasama ang iba't-ibang karakter na maraming pasabog na entry tungkol sa mga isyu pampamilya at marami pang iba.

Ang istoryang ito ay umiikot sa pamilyang Ambida ni Ian (Jerald), Janet (Kim), at ang kanilang unica hija na si Yeye (Gianna Aguiron) kung saan susubukin ang tibay ng kanilang pagmamahal sa isa't-isa lalo na't umeekse na sa scenario ang nanay ni Janet na si Violeta Bagsic (Yayo) at ama ni Ian na si Arman Ambida (Anjo) dala ng pagkakaiba ng kanilang lifestyle at pinansyal na pagpapalaki.

Ano nga ba ang dapat gawin ng Ambida Family sa parating pagbabangyan ng kanilang mga in-laws? Lalo na't parating nagpaparinig si Violeta na hindi siya aprubado kay Ian bilang asawa ng anak niyang si Janet dagdagan pa ng di pagsang-ayon ni Arman na maliit-liitin ni Violeta ang kanyang anak na si Ian. Paano kaya mapa pagbati ni Janet at Ian ang kanilang mga magulang at maging magkakampi sa Team Ambida o Team A?

Makakasama rin sa Team A cast sina Gene Padilla bilang Mon Bagsic, asawa ni Violeta at ama ni Janet; Cindy Miranda bilang Rochelle, isang beauty-queen YouTuber na kapatid ni Janet; Marc Acueza bilang Estong, asawa ni Rochelle na mukhang inosente pero napakayaman; Ethan David bilang Jaime Sobel, ang mayabang na kapwa driver ni Ian; at Ashtine Olgiva bilang Diane, nakababatang kapatid ni Janet.

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The tiny Philippine island on the frontline of the US-China battle for supremacy

Years ago, Fuga Island was set to host a Chinese ‘smart city’. Now it may become home to American troops as the US seeks to protect Taiwan and the region

The azure waters are inviting and its long stretches of clear white sand are spotless. But hardly anyone is swimming or sunbathing. Fuga Island is not a holiday destination. The residents of the remote community of just over 2,000 on the northern tip of the Philippines are farmers and fishermen – growing palay and corn; raising native chicken, pigs and goats; and catching their bounty from the sea. However, things are changing on Fuga Island. These days a detachment of marines watches its coastline closely. The coast guard also regularly patrols the area, and might soon build a station there. They could soon be joined by US troops, too. To understand why requires only a brief look at the map. Fuga lies less than 400km (250 miles) from Taiwan and is situated in waters connecting the South China Sea to the Pacific Ocean, an area that is critical to the defence of the Philippines itself. As tensions rise in the region, its location

means Fuga Island is in demand. The land mass is part of Cagayan, one of the provinces identified as a potential site to host the US military under a deal called the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which allows joint training, construction of temporary facilities, and storage of equipment and supplies. Unlike his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte, President Marcos Jr has taken a stand against China’s aggression in the South China Sea, strengthening diplomatic and security ties with the US, Australia and Japan. The Philippines has reported dangerous manoeuvres by the China Coast Guard in the Spratly Islands, and in February accused Beijing of pointing a military-grade laser at a coast guard vessel. Amid the escalating rhetoric, Marcos has agreed to expand from five to nine the number of its sites that the US military can access under the EDCA. Discussions are still under way on which sites to choose, but local military analysts say Fuga offers the most strategic value. Unlike other islands in the area, Fuga has the

topography to accommodate an airport and a seaport. “We want the marines and the coast guard here to protect the island. If it’s just us village officials, we cannot cover the entire area,” says Melchor Visario, the village chief on Fuga. He governs six communities scattered around the island, managing its meagre resources. He has been entertaining more visitors in recent years, as attention on the island grows. “We haven’t heard about the Americans coming here . . . They are also welcome.” While the likelihood of China’s military invading Taiwan remains a point of debate, the fear that Chinese forces would one day occupy Fuga is very real to its residents. “We are part of the Philippines. Where do we run? We will die if we are going to fight them ourselves,” says Marlon Erice, 46, a resident. “We will be safe here [with the security forces].”

China wanted Fuga first. It was Beijing, not Washington, that first saw Fuga’s potential. In 2019, Chinese company Fong Zhi Enterprise Corporation entered into an agreement with the private company that holds the title to the island, Fuga Island Holdings Inc, to build a “smart city” there as part of a \$2bn project.

However, the plan caused uproar in the Philippines security establishment, which was concerned about giving the Chinese an observation post within the country’s borders. The military quickly reached an agreement with regional leaders to establish a navy base on Fuga.

The smart city project did not materialise, but several other China-funded projects were planned for the province, including manufacturing facilities, a high-tech industrial park, and an airport expansion, among others. Four years later, it may be the US’s turn to have a presence on the island. Fuga Island has undoubted strategic value to either superpower, as well as the Philippines. It is adjacent to two key passages – the Luzon Strait and the Bashi Channel – which provide access to the South China Sea and the Pacific.

“[The US military deal] will allow the navy to monitor vessels and traffic and provide a base of operations for naval and air operations in the northern border,” says retired Rear Admiral Rommel Jude Ong, who is now a professor of praxis at the Ateneo School of Government in Manila. “The PLA [People’s Liberation Army] navy used this route during the recent Taiwan crisis,” he says, referring to China’s exercises near Taiwan in August 2022.

Alex Vuving, a professor at the Daniel K Inouye Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies in Hawaii, says a location in the northern Philippines would give the US access to Taiwan and the South China Sea, “two major places on the lifeline of Asia and the frontier of the great power competition of our time”. With the military comes vital supplies. Despite their fears of China’s ambitions for the region, residents are enjoying the new atten-

tion the neglected island has been receiving. “Services are coming to us unlike before,” says Visario. The difficulty of sea transport means the remote island has to rely on its own resources as much as possible, especially during the windy months from September to December when small boats cannot sail to the mainland. It has an elementary school and some internet service, though it is usually patchy. Medical facilities are a boat ride away. There’s an old airstrip on the island, but it is owned by a private company that holds the title to the island and it’s not clear if it remains operational.

However, the regular trips of the navy and coast guard have guaranteed more regular supply runs. The marines brought a power generator. They turn on the TV for the early evening news, drawing nightly crowds at their base. Homes on the island rely on small solar-power units to run lights and charge phones. Government workers arrived last year to teach the women dressmaking. The women now wish to get training on baking for those months when no one can travel. “We are afraid [of conflict erupting] but maybe it won’t happen,” said Ruby Visario, the wife of the village chief.

‘Curse of geography’ In March 2022, Appari, the municipality in which Fuga lies, hosted war games by the Philippine and US militaries on its shores. Helicopters, amphibious assault ships and a surface-to-air missile defence system were put on display to exhibit a coastal defence strategy, enthralled residents.

The war games offered a “foretaste of EDCA”, says Father Manuel Catral, parish priest in Aparri. He says the locals welcomed the presence of the US troops and he himself was quite impressed with the hardware they brought. However, he says there needs to be more conversation if an EDCA facility is going to be built and US troops are to stay longer. Some of the fishing grounds were closed during the war

games to protect residents. “We haven’t really talked about it. But is that what’s going to happen under EDCA?” he says. “That will be an important issue for the people.”

In April, the Philippines and the US will carry out their biggest ever joint military exercises, called “balikatan” or “shoulder-to-shoulder” drills. The war games are designed to project stability and deterrence but tensions are rising in the region, the US military grows more pessimistic about avoiding a Chinese invasion of Taiwan in the next few years, and new military alliances such as Aukus are being formed to counter Beijing.

As the uncertainty spirals, and the risks of a miscalculation increase, one thing is clear to retired Rear Admiral Ong: the Philippines cannot avoid getting involved if the Taiwan crisis erupts into a conflict. “It’s the curse of geography.”

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Cavite massacre of 4 OFW kids mirrors fears for those left behind, search for solutions

MANILA, Philippines—The dreams of an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) for her children came to a tragic end last March 9 when her four children—three girls and a boy—were killed by her live-in partner in Trece Martires City, Cavite province.

Virginia Dela Peña, an OFW in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, returned to the Philippines last March 11 and went straight to Taysan, Batangas but not for the kind of reunion that she and her children had been waiting for years.

She came back to grieve over the death of four of her five children, who had been stabbed and killed by her live-in partner, who eventually killed himself after the massacre of the victims, who were only 14, 12, 9, and 5 years old.

The tragedy was so serious that it prompted the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) to look at developing a program to care for the children of OFWs, who are left to non-parents, to prevent a repeat of the violence that killed the children.

Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople said she will engage the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in a discussion on how they can assist the children of OFWs left to next of kin or household members other than the actual parents.

As Ople explained to INQUIRER.net on Tuesday (March 14), she talked to Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian since “they have a program for children.” She said the DMW has existing programs, too, but these still need to be strengthened.

“It is critically important that there is a unit within the department that is dedicated for family relations—a unit that can formulate policies and programs to address the social costs of labor migration,” she said.

Ople made clear, however, that what she said is “not yet concretized,” stressing that a care program for the children of OFWs “really needs to be a product of technical planning, technical work.”

Violent, grievous deaths

The death of Dela Peña’s children is not the first case of OFW children being abused or killed by people trusted to care for them while the parents are away to work and provide a better future for them.

In 2016, a 2-year-old son of an OFW in Bahrain was also killed after being beaten to death by his guardians in Davao City, who allegedly got irritated when the child peed his pants.

The boy had been rushed to a hospital but was declared dead on arrival. He suffered multiple injuries. His mother, Erlinda Cagalitan, believed that her son suffered physical abuse.

Last year, two children—15 and 11 years old—were raped and killed in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur by the boyfriend of their mother, an OFW in the Middle East. The victims had been stabbed and shot to death.

As the police said, the bloodied bodies of the two girls were discovered on November 11, 2022 after a neighbor, who heard the victims screaming for help, went to their house to check on the children.

Both suspects in the killings in Davao City and Davao del Sur had already been arrested.

Back in 2017, the Mindanao Migrants Center for Empowering Actions Inc. (MMCEAI) in Davao City said it has documented a total of 132 cases of children of OFWs being abused and molested.

Its executive director, Inorisa Sialana-Elenito, had said from 2014 to 2017, the MMCEAI data indicated that there were several cases of abuse against children of OFWs, who were also found to be in a constant state of “worry and fear.”

Concern for left-behind children

As stressed in a study written by community development expert Mark Anthony Abenir and published by the University of the Philippines’ College of Social Work and Community Development, “left-behind

children of migrating parent(s) have become a matter of growing concern to the global community.”

Highlighting what was said in the United Nations report “Migration, Development and Children Left Behind,” Abenir said “the concern for these children is anchored upon the issue that separation from their parent(s) exposes them to certain risks such as being abused or trafficked.”

As Ople said, “the risk of having one or both parents [working] overseas is the increased vulnerability of the children left behind.”

Based on data from the National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children, at least 3 in 5 children aged 13 to 24 years old experienced childhood physical violence in its various forms.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) and the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) said 60 percent, or over half of the cases, happened at home and that 4.6 percent were physically abused with injuries that required hospitalization.

Specifically, one in two received corporal punishments at home, like spanking with a bare hand, rolled paper or small stick, and pulling the hair, pinching or twisting of ears, while a third suffered from more severe forms of abuse like slapping, kicking, smothering, tying, drowning, burning.

As stressed by the two agencies, based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on Violence Against Children, “migration has been identified by the SLR as one of the drivers of physical, sexual and emotional violence against children.”

Based on the latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there were 1.83 million OFWs in 2021, which consisted of 96.4 percent with existing work contracts and 3.6 percent without working visa or work permits.

The PSA, sharing the results of the Survey on Overseas Filipinos, said the number of OFWs increased by 3 percent from 1.77

million in 2020, but still below 2.2 million in 2019.

Anxious OFWs

Ople said many of the reasons behind the “anxiety being felt by workers overseas and their families back home have to do with family ties, especially for mothers, who earn from caring for other people’s children.”

She stressed that “they especially need support not only from the government but also civil society groups and even interfaith groups on how their children can be mainstreamed and be better protected.”

Based on data from the PSA, there were more women working overseas, accounting for 60.2 percent, or 1.10 million, in 2021. Male OFWs accounted for only 39.8 percent, or 730,000.

Back in 2020, the PSA said “international labor migration has been a part of Filipino family life,” with the 2018 National Migration Survey (NMS) finding out that 12 percent of Filipino households “had a member who was or had been an OFW.”

The PSA said when the NMS was conducted, nine percent of households had at least one member currently overseas.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was the region with the highest percentage (24 percent) of households with current or former OFW members, followed by Cagayan Valley (22 percent) and the Ilocos Region (18 percent).

It said in contrast, Caraga Region (5 percent), Mimaropa (7 percent) and Central Luzon (7 percent) had the lowest percentage of households with current or former OFW members.

MOU on protecting OFW kids

Back in 2017, the Department of Labor and Employment, through the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DSWD and Department of Justice (DOJ) for the provision of full protection to children left behind by OFWs.

“We were quite alarmed by the results of the study on violence against children which

stated that migration is one of the reasons of physical, sexual, or psychological violence to children,” said then Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, highlighting the study initiated by the CWC and Unicef.

Bello stressed that the MOU is part of the government’s effort to balance the desire of the OFW parents to provide for the needs of their children by working overseas on one hand, and to ensure that their children are in the safe hands of the people they have chosen to look after the wellbeing of their loved ones.

As stated in the agreement, OWWA shall intensify child protection campaigns on violence against children, especially children of OFWs through the immediate clarification and resolution of issues and concerns raised by the OFWs.

It shall also integrate the Child Abuse and Exploitation module prepared by the DSWD in the conduct of trainings and orientations for OFWs and their families, and report suspected cases or incidence of child abuse to DSWD, DOJ and other law enforcement authorities.

The DOJ is expected to conduct preliminary investigation on child abuse and exploitation cases; provide legal advice/assistance to the child/family; coordinate and monitor the status of referred cases filed at the Prosecutors’ Offices and in courts.

It was also expected to ensure child-friendly, child and gender sensitive investigations of cases as stipulated in the DOJ-CSPC Protocol for the Management of Child Victims of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation; conduct speedy preliminary investigation/resolution of referred cases; and participate in the case conferences on cases referred by OWWA and in convergence programs.

The DSWD shall provide assistance, shelter and protection to children of OFWs who are victims of child abuse and exploitation in coordination with the LGUs; coordinate with the agencies covered by the MOU on the process of reporting complaints and assistance; and participate in the prevention campaign against Child Abuse and Exploitation.

Kris Bernal reflects on the value of taking it slow

Earlier this month, actress Kris Bernal delighted fans and friends with her pregnancy announcement on social media. Now roughly 17 weeks pregnant, Kris gets candid about her journey toward being a first-time mother.

Kapuso actress Kris Bernal will soon welcome her first child

Her family was the first to know about her life-changing

news before she posted the viral mock-up movie posters announcing her pregnancy. Yet amid all the parenting advice she received from friends and family, the one that resonated the most with Kris was learning to take it slow.

As an actress, Kris doesn't shy away from intense drama roles, as evident in her characters in *Artikulo 247* and *Hanggang*

Sa Dulo Ng Buhay Ko, among others. She even goes out of her comfort zone to star in the Prime Video murder mystery comedy *Ten Little Mistresses*, which she shot last September, some months before Kris learned she was with child.

Despite her wishes to be active in showbiz, Kris has to take a step back and consider her health, especially now that she's

responsible for another life besides her own.

Despite being in the early stages of pregnancy, Kris hopes to stay active in showbiz through minor roles or appearances

"Since I'm a workaholic, there were times na I felt guilty not working. And there were times na I felt helpless kasi bedrest ako. But then, you have to surrender to what your body or your baby needed," Kris told Manila Standard Entertainment



during an intimate press conference at one of her business ventures, House of Gogi in Quezon City.

Kris added that being pregnant is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and blessing, but she can always return to her job and bring back the money.

Yet, since she's still in the early stages of pregnancy, Kris hopes to remain active in the industry, even for minor appearances.

"Hangga't kaya, gusto ko mag-work. May mga guestings naman na hindi masyadong tedious—uupo lang, interview lang. Wala namang mga physical activities or work from home," Kris said.

The Kapuso actress also feels secure with her pregnancy because, aside from it not being too complicated, she has her husband, Perry Choi, to guide and support her. Kris shared that despite her hubby's playful nature, which few people see, he's attentive to her needs and wants. He also goes the extra mile by reminding Kris to avoid strenuous activities.

When asked whether they have gender preferences for their firstborn, Kris said they want a healthy baby first and foremost but would be happy with either one. Still, Kris admitted to wanting a girl because she's very chic and hopes to share her interests with a daughter. But even so, she and Perry will welcome their first child with open arms and loving hearts.

Kris's journey as a first-time mother will be eventful as she learns the ups and downs of parenthood.

"I don't think we can ever say that we are fully ready because there's no such thing as a manual to becoming the 'perfect mom.' But that's the thing. When you aren't fully ready for something, you try your best to equip yourself so you become ready. It's constantly learning to become the mom you want to be—which makes you the mom that your child needs," she said.



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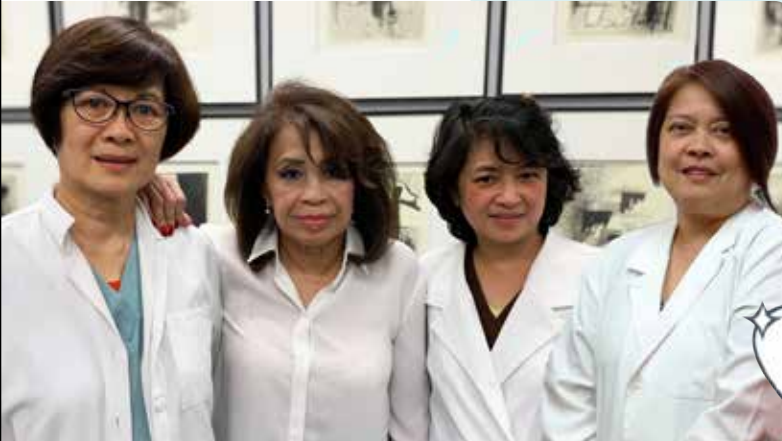
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